

A Phenomenological study of venting about work on Facebook

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of

**Master of Commerce in Management**

In the

School of Business and Economics,

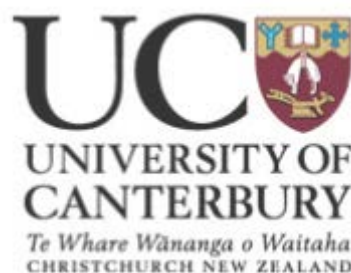
Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship

University of Canterbury

By

ANDREA MARCIAL THOMSON

2017



Principal Supervisor: Dr. Ekant Veer

Associate Supervisor: Mr. Russell Wordsworth

# Abstract

**Purpose-** To better understand what motivates employees to vent on the social media platform Facebook about work and why Facebook is selected by employees as a platform to vent.

**Methodology-** This study used phenomenological interviews to investigate instances where employees had vented about work on Facebook. 10 Generation-Y participants were interviewed using semi-structured, convergent and open-ended interviewing techniques, and asked to recall the circumstances surrounding their respective Facebook posts. Generation-Y participants were selected as they make up one of the largest Facebook user groups. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and a conceptual framework derived from the findings was presented and discussed.

**Findings-** The findings of this research indicate that the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook is far more complex than simply an impulsive manifestation of an individual's stress or frustration. Venting was used as an emotion-focused coping strategy and a response to feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation within the organisation. Participants' primary motivation for venting on Facebook was not to disparage their employer, but instead to utilize Facebook as a platform for communicating with peers and accessing social support. The participants felt their concerns were treated as insignificant and the lack of in-organisations processes to express voice or access support structures encouraged them to exert voice and seek support from outside of the workplace. Facebook was used to obtain additional social support from a community of known individuals. Facebook's high membership rate also allowed participants to communicate with a large number and wide range of peers simultaneously, giving access to a larger network of social support as well as overcoming space and time challenges associated with face-to-face venting. This thesis argues that venting about work on Facebook facilitates access to social support outside of the work setting, which serves as an extension of traditional workplace coping strategies. The findings do not help determine if work-related venting on Facebook is an effective method of coping, due to the differential outcomes observed by participants. However, it has provided key insights to the complex mechanisms that comprise the phenomenon.

**Implications-** This research highlights that venting on Facebook has been used as a way to cope with work-related stressors such as feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation. Social media policies that aim to restrict employee voice online are unlikely to remove the impetus to vent on social media platforms such as Facebook. This research highlights the need to revisit these policies. For example, acknowledging the importance of social media as a way to access

social support whilst also encouraging and allowing constructive venting to take place within the organisation. Organisations may wish to consider allowing employees to vent on Facebook provided that the organisation is not identifiable. Furthermore, organisations may wish to consider creating in-organisation processes that aim to prevent employee feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation, which in theory should subsequently reduce the impetus to vent outside of work. Venting on Facebook was demonstrated as beneficial in some circumstances but not in others. In instances where venting allowed participants to access necessary social support and allowed negative emotions to be extinguished, it was considered a beneficial outcome. Venting was also demonstrated as detrimental when it encouraged the participant to continue to ruminate about their circumstances and contributed to ongoing stress and frustration. Limitations and suggestions for future research are provided.

# Acknowledgements

What a journey this has been. The last two and a bit years have been signified a period of growth, both personally and professionally. The challenges I have faced have provided opportunities to become more resilient, patient with myself, and to continue to persevere even when it would be so much easier to give up. At times it felt as if I was walking this journey alone but the encouragement from all the people who played a part in my success has been integral to the completion of my thesis. I consider myself extremely blessed to have so many amazing and supportive people in my life.

Firstly I would like to thank my Supervisor Ekant Veer and Associate Supervisor Russell Wordsworth. While no words can truly express how grateful I am to have had your guidance and support over the past 2 and a half years, I want you both to know how much I have really appreciated and enjoyed working and learning from you. Your advice, enthusiasm in my topic, depth of knowledge, and most importantly your patience and belief in me has been absolutely critical to my completion. Thank you for not allowing me to give up, even when over the last several months I thought that I might.

Additionally, I owe a special gratitude to my research participants. I sincerely appreciate the time and stories you contributed. Without your invaluable input, this thesis would have not been made possible. Thank you for everything you have shared with me.

To my friends and flatmates, thank you for being supportive, encouraging and patient whilst I allowed this thesis to temporarily to take over my life. Thank you for pushing me to take breaks and provide a place to escape. It meant so much more than you know. Through the MCom programme, I have been able to create so many great memories with a truly extraordinary bunch of individuals. I wish you all the best.

An extra special thank you to Ethan for all the laughs and support while you've been away. I am immensely proud of all your hard earned achievements, and these have been a source of inspiration for me. I also consider myself very lucky to have you as a best friend as well as my brother

It is with all my love that I dedicate this thesis to Martin and Marjorie. I am incredibly fortunate to have two generous and caring parents. Your unwavering support and endless encouragement has meant so much and I hope that I have done you proud. Thank you for everything that you have done to enable me to be who I am today; words cannot express how grateful I am. You have always inspired me to follow my dreams, work hard, have fun and never ever give up.

Thank you. A million times, thank you

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction.....	1
Social Media, Facebook and Generation-Y .....	1
Venting and Social Media.....	3
Employee Venting and the Implications for Organisations.....	4
Aims and Purpose of the Study .....	6
Structure of this Thesis .....	8
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction.....	9
Venting Behaviour.....	9
Venting and Coping.....	12
Social Sharing and responses to Venting.....	13
Employee Voice .....	17
Chapter Summary.....	19
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction.....	21
Philosophical Assumptions.....	21
Introduction to Phenomenology.....	22
Research Design .....	24
Role of the Researcher .....	24
Personal Biography.....	25
Chapter Summary.....	26
<b>Chapter Four: Data Collection &amp; Analysis.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Introduction.....	27
Selection of Participants .....	27
Participant Eligibility and Recruitment.....	27
Sampling .....	28
Data Collection Procedures.....	29
Interview Protocol .....	29
Interview Approach.....	29
Pre-interview Procedures.....	30
The Interviews.....	30
Initial Interview Questions .....	31
Data Analysis Procedures.....	32

Method of Analysis .....	32
The Process of Thematic Analysis .....	32
Ethical Considerations.....	35
Chapter Summary.....	35
<b>Chapter Five: Findings &amp; Observations.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Introduction.....	37
Participant Summaries .....	38
Negative Emotions: Experiencing Negative Emotions.....	39
Negative Emotions: Attempting to Solve Problems .....	41
Negative Emotions: Purging Negative Emotions.....	42
Negative Emotions: Showing Signs of Stress .....	42
Communicating with Others: Friends and family .....	44
Communicating with Others: Using Facebook to Interact.....	45
Communicating with Others: Making Light of Tough Times .....	46
Communicating with Others: Fostering Bonds with Others.....	47
Sense of Community: Interacting with Friends or Family .....	48
Sense of Community: Creating a Community .....	49
Sense of Community: Wanting Support and Seeking support .....	50
Sense of Community: Obtaining Responses to regain Self-Esteem.....	51
Sense of Community: Feeling Empowered .....	52
Individual consequences: Wanting to Leave.....	52
Individual consequences: Feeling Disengaged.....	55
Summary of Findings .....	55
<b>Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings &amp; Implications for Practice.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Introduction.....	57
Discussion of the Phenomenon .....	57
Antecedents and Motivations to Vent .....	57
The Outcome of the Vent.....	63
Conceptual Framework.....	69
Reaction Venting.....	69
Action Venting .....	69
Frustration from Inaction .....	70
Proposed Framework.....	70
Theoretical Implications.....	73
Practical Contributions.....	75
Social Media Policies .....	75
Proactively Addressing Feelings of Marginalisation .....	76
Proactively Addressing Feelings of Voice Minimisation .....	76
Reacting to Instances of Online Venting.....	78
<b>Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>80</b>
Introduction.....	80
Concluding Remarks.....	80
Limitations .....	83

Areas for Future Research .....	84
Summary of the Research Purpose.....	85
<b>References .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>106</b>
Appendix A: Recruiting Advertisement (Facebook) .....	106
Appendix B: Recruiting Advertisement (Print Flyers).....	107
Appendix C: UC Ethics Approval.....	108
Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet.....	109
Appendix E: Informed Consent Form .....	110
Appendix F: Pre-Interview Questionnaire.....	111
Appendix G: Interview Protocol.....	112
Appendix H: Interview Notes Template .....	115
Appendix I: Participant Profiles and Self-reported Biography .....	117
Participant 1: Lina.....	117
Participant 2: Hamish.....	120
Participant 3: Michael.....	127
Participant 4: Charlotte.....	133
Participant 5: Jack.....	136
Participant 6: Cara .....	139
Participant 7: Lucas.....	145
Participant 8: Lucy.....	152
Participant 9: Alice.....	157
Participant 10: Lily .....	159
Appendix J: Codes, Themes and Categories from Interview Transcripts .....	163
Appendix K: Process of Thematic Analysis.....	171

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Phases of Venting.....	70
Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Framework.....	72
Figure 3 Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket.....	125
Figure 4: Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket .....	126
Figure 5: Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket .....	126
Figure 6: Michael's Facebook post (Part 1) .....	131
Figure 7: Michael's Facebook post (Part 2) .....	132
Figure 8: Jack's Facebook post (Part 1) .....	138
Figure 9: Jack's Facebook post (Part 2) .....	138
Figure 10: Cara's Facebook post (Part 1) .....	142
Figure 11: Cara's Facebook post (Part 2) .....	143
Figure 12: Cara's Facebook post (Part 3) .....	144
Figure 13: Lucas's Facebook post (Part 1) .....	150
Figure 14: Lucas's Facebook post (Part 2) .....	151
Figure 15: Lucy's Facebook post (Part 1) .....	156
Figure 16: Lucy's Facebook post (Part 2) .....	156
Figure 17: Lily's Facebook post.....	162

## List of Tables

Table 1: Participant Summary .....	38
Table 2 Current Job Statuses .....	54
Table 3: Turnover Intention .....	54
Table 4: Current Job Status + Turnover Intention .....	54



# Glossary of Terms

**App**-An application downloaded by a user to a mobile device (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2017)

**Facebook Friends**- a user's personal contacts which makes up their 'social network' on Facebook. Often just referred to as 'friends' when speaking in the context of Facebook.

**Facebook**- Popular social networking website

**Facebook Profile**- a personal social network account where users can display information about themselves. Often colloquially referred to as one's 'profile'

**Facemail**- The act of sending a private message to another user on Facebook. Also known as 'private messaging' (PM).

**Friend request**- the act of asking another person who has a profile on a particular social media site, to accept a request to connect, allowing them to become part of one's 'social network'.

**Instagram**- a free social network platform that enables users to take, edit and share photos with other Instagram users (TechTarget, 2017)

**Liking**- Clicking 'like' (the thumbs up button) below a post on Facebook is way to let people know that you enjoy it without leaving a comment (Facebook, 2017)

**LinkedIn**- a social networking site designed specifically for the business community, allowing members to establish networks of people they know and trust professionally. (TechTarget, 2017)

**LOL**- Abbreviation for 'laughs out loud'

**Meme**- An image, video or piece of text, which is typically humorous in nature often spread rapidly by Internet users (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2017)

**MySpace**- originally founded as an online platform for musicians or bands to share music. MySpace also allows users to create profiles, post photographs, blogs, as well as music and movie preferences (TechTarget, 2017)

**OP**- short for Original post or Original poster, signalling the first person who created the post on a social media website.

**Posting/Sharing**- the act of sending publically visible material to others on social networking websites

**Snapchat** an app that allows users to send and receive images that self-delete (TechTarget, 2017)

**Status update:** sharing textual content on users' 'Facebook Wall'

**Tag-** The act of identifying someone else in a post or photo. It indicates to the other person that you have mentioned or referred to them.

**Twitter-** a social networking microblogging service, that allows members to share short posts called tweets. (TechTarget, 2017)

**Wall-** A Facebook feature where users can 'post' or 'share' publically visible content on the walls of other users. This can include pictures, text and videos.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Introduction

This research aims to investigate the phenomenon of work-related venting on the social media platform, Facebook. By examining instances where individuals have vented about their work online, this research intends provide insights to the underlying mechanisms of the phenomenon. This will help provide readers with an understanding of what motivates individuals to vent on Facebook and the purposes and objectives behind why they select Facebook as their platform to vent. Current literature cites forms of venting as a coping strategy for stress, and there is has been studies that provide empirical evidence for the benefits employee voice. However, literature that examines employee voice online such as work-related Facebook venting is still relatively limited. This research therefore aims to address an existing gap in literature by focusing on the intersection between venting on social media and venting about work to provide a qualitative explanation of why it occurs.

### Social Media, Facebook and Generation-Y

Although there appears not to be a unanimously accepted definition available, social media can be described is as an online (internet) based application, which allows content to be created by users and shared with other users or members of that application (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Ng, Shao & Liu, 2016; Spallek, Turner, Donate-Bartfield, Chambers, McAndrew, Zarkowski & Karimbux, 2015). Social media platforms can be considered both dynamic and organic as they are continually evolving and being updated with new features to meet the needs and objectives of their account holders (Coe, 2015) as well as attempting to outcompete other emerging or developing platforms (Van Dijck, 2013). Of the copious number of applications available, Facebook is a popular social media platform that encourages dialogue exchange with members of a users' self-regulated network of contacts. Since its inception in 2004, Facebook has experienced exponential growth in membership and has seen the constant introduction of additional features that continue to allow users to create and maintain connections with peers. In 2004 there were approximately 1 million Facebook users (Facebook Newsroom, 2016). As of March 2017, it is estimated there are around 1.94 billion users worldwide who access their Facebook account at least once a month (Facebook Newsroom, 2017). Furthermore, it is predicted that almost two thirds of the two billion plus active social media accounts across the various platforms, are accessed via mobile technologies (Kemp, 2015). The rise in popularity, membership and increasingly easier access to social media platforms such as Facebook, has influenced how the internet is used for communication and socialization (Coe, 2015; Fieseler,

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

Meckel & Ranzini, 2015), demonstrated by the growing number of individuals that are using internet based applications to communicate. In addition, Facebook provides a way for users to overcome the challenges that are experienced when using face to face or time delayed methods of communication (Choi & Toma, 2014). This demonstrates how forms of online communication provide opportunities for individuals to communicate more easily than before (van Ingen, & Wright, 2016). Prior to the emergence of the internet and social networking, gratification from interaction and communication was delayed due to inaccessibility, unresponsiveness and scheduling (Urista, Dong & Day, 2009). Now, the combination of social media and mobile devices allows communication and interaction needs and wants to be met instantaneously and more frequently than desktop devices (Urista et al., 2009). Unfortunately, the rapid growth of social media membership and functionality that enables information to be fluidly shared continues to present issues around how to control it (Kellett & Hede, 2013; Spallek et al., 2015). Organisations are faced with the challenging task of creating social media policies that protect their interests and reputation, as well as ensuring these policies are future-proofed to encompass forms of social media that do not currently exist. However, often these social media policies aim to restrict employees' out-of-work conduct and fail to acknowledge the role social media plays in facilitating communication, expressing opinions and portraying an individual's out-of-work persona.

It has been suggested that Facebook use is motivated by two primary needs: the need to belong and the need for self-presentation (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). Facebook allows users to both play an active role in constructing and maintaining their online identity and socialise with others (Urista et al., 2009). The ability to create a self-regulated community helps users fulfil the first need, and the ability to share information with the user's desired community fulfils the second Facebook encourages and allows information to be spread quickly, through functional features such as a user's Facebook 'wall' or by using Facebook messenger to 'chat' with others. Information can be shared with a particular audience meaning that information may be shared publically to Facebook friends but privately from others, simultaneously. Furthermore, compared to other forms of anonymous or pseudonymous digital communication such as chat-rooms, blogs and forums, Facebook serves as a way for communication to be targeted to a self-constructed audience in a non-anonymous way (Schoneboom, 2011). By allowing users to self-regulate members of their community, it may enable users to feel safe to disclose information. However, this perceived trust towards their the audience can also make venting on social media about work-related content problematic, as content initially shared with intended peers may be further circulated to other unintended individuals. Traditional paper based forms of communication are much more easily destroyed. Information shared on

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

the Internet it can easily be sent on to others without the original posters knowledge or consent, making Internet communications extremely difficult to remove once it has been published.

It is generally acknowledged that users aged 18 to 35; commonly referred to as Generation-Y, make up a significant proportion of Facebook members. Generation-Y has also been referred to as Gen-Y, Millennials, the Net-generation or Net-Geners (Tapscott, 2008). Gen-Y have been considered 'digital natives', being the first complete generational cohort who have spent their entire lives with access to digital technologies, and this is thought to have had a profound impact on how this generation lives and works (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008; Wesner & Miller, 2008). Described as 'technologically savvy' (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro & Solnet, 2013), Gen-Y are believed to be more comfortable with technology and are more likely to be active contributors and consumers of online content than their predecessors (Leung, 2013). This generation has been immersed by technology that enables conversations online rather than in person (Generation Y, 2016), arguably influenced by the availability of technology that offers instant gratification (Bolton et al., 2013). Whilst there appears to be an overall agreement on Gen-Y's high intensity or frequent use of various types of social media, the myriad of social networking applications available makes it more difficult to draw conclusions regarding the types of social media which they use (Bolton et al., 2013). Early and on-going exposure to technology has resulted in cognitive, emotional and social outcomes for Gen-Y, namely their reliance on technology for entertainment (Urista et al., 2009) to be able to interact with others (Hidalgo, Tan & Verlegh, 2015), emotional regulation (Immordino-Yang, Christodoulou, & Singh, 2012) and to search for information (Urista et al., 2009). However, similar to other generations, it is believed that Gen-Y also use social media platforms for the same reasons as other cohorts such as searching for information or to access entertainment (Leung, 2013; Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009; Urista et al., 2009) or socialisation and communication with others (Hidalgo, Tan & Verlegh, 2015; Leung, 2013; Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that internet users are motivated to utilize social media platforms to meet social needs which can include obtaining recognition and venting negative feelings (Leung, 2013).

### **Venting and Social Media**

Venting has been extensively studied within the psychology literature as part of rehabilitation from injury or illness (Asuzu & Elumelu, 2013; Wadey, Podlog, Hall, Hamson-Utley, Hicks-Little & Hammer, 2014; Tan-Kristanto & Kiropoulos, 2015), depression and suicide (Ahuja, Biesaga, Sudak, Draper & Womble, 2014), a coping mechanism after a traumatic event or disaster (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; Neubaum, Rösner, Rosenthal-von der Pütten & Krämer, 2014; Veer,

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

Ozanne & Hall, 2015), dealing with grief (Nazaré, Fonseca & Canavarro, 2013) and as a strategy to deal with stress (Montero-Marin, Prado-Abril, Demarzo, Gascon & García-Campayo, 2014; Nelson, Dell'Oliveira, Koch, & Buckler, 2001). Venting has also been explored as an emotional regulation strategy for aggression or anger (Bushman, 2002), although subsequent studies offer conflicting results (Aloia & Solomon, 2016).

Current employee voice literature looks at both venting about work and venting whilst at work. Work-related venting studies examine the effects of anger expression in the workplace (Callister, Geddes & Gibson, 2017; Fitness, 2000; Geddes & Callister, 2007; Stickney & Geddes, 2016; Wranik, 2011) or when anger is unable to be expressed at work and how it manifests outside of the work setting (Grandey, 2000; Liu, Wang, Chang, Shi, Zhou & Shao, 2015). However, this literature is yet to examine instances of employee voice such as work-related venting on social media platforms like Facebook. Understandably, instances of work-related venting have been linked to work-related stress (Boren, 2014; Mukosolu, Ibrahim, Rampal, Rampal & Ibrahim, 2015). Addressing work-related stress has been a significant topic in employment research because of the negative implications it has on both the individual and the organisation such as turnover intentions, counterproductive workplace behaviours, burnout or increased absenteeism.

For many people, the adoption and integration of social media has become a part of day-to-day interactions and therefore has influenced how individuals communicate and socialize with others (Fieseler, Meckel & Ranzini, 2015). Therefore, the rise in popularity of social media platforms has impacted how individuals can express anger or frustration by allowing employees to vent their work frustrations online instead of face to face (McDonald & Thompson, 2016).

### **Employee Venting and the Implications for Organisations**

Social media has been a contributor to employment relationship issues, as cited in studies by Carlson (2014), Davis (2012), Dennis, (2010), Kennedy (2013), Landers & Goldberg (2014), Myddleton & Fullwood (2016), Thornthwaite (2013; 2015). These articles attempt to identify and navigate challenges associated with social media and the employment relationship such as the changing and contested terrain regarding the boundaries between employees personal and professional lives (McDonald & Thompson, 2016), freedom of employee expression (Coe, 2015) and addressing organisational risk (Gonzalez, 2014). Computer-enabled employee venting such as anonymous or pseudonymous blogging (Richards, 2008; Richards & Kosmala, 2013; Schoneboom, 2011), posting on websites dedicated to venting about work or online discussion forums has been explored within the literature (Da Cunha & Orlikowski, 2008). Examples of

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

literature regarding legal proceedings about employee terminations relating to social media conduct (Myers, 2014; Neal, 2012; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015) continue to highlight the challenges associated with attempting to regulate employee voice online. Given the growing popularity of social media platforms observed to date, it is unlikely that social media communications will wane, making employment related social media research a burning topic.

Recently, venting on social media about work-related topics has gained both public and academic attention, highlighted by instances where an employees' use of social media has led to legal issues in the employment relationship and have been subject to disciplinary action or whose employment has resulted in terminations (Carlson, 2014; Lam, 2016; McDonald & Thompson, 2016; O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2015). The use of the internet by employees as an outlet to vent has seen instances when employees have been dismissed or received disciplinary action for non-anonymous posts (Shoss, et al., 2013). The term "Facebook fired" (O'Connor et al., 2015; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015), has been derived from employees whom have misused social media or drawn negative attention to their employers because of an online post. These usually include instances of when employees have behaved in a way that reflects negatively or threatens the image or reputation of their role, profession or organisation; or when they have made disparaging comments about their work or employers. For example:

- A Sydney-based hotel supervisor was fired after he made racist and offensive comments towards an Australian columnist on her Facebook page (Levy, 2015):
- A former Ministry of Social Development employee was sacked in 2007 after a post she made on Facebook describing herself as "very expensive paperweight", "highly competent in the art of time wastage, blame-shifting and stationary [sic] theft" (Robinson, 2010);
- A Wellington Free Ambulance officer was dismissed in 2010 following a confrontation with another colleague, which continued after work and via Facebook where she sent messages to the co-worker where she used offensive language (Lin, 2015)
- A New Zealand Post employee who created a comical blog about a fictional postman was dismissed from his job (Lin, 2015);
- A man was dismissed after Facebook photos surfaced after the employee had called in sick to work (Chatterton, 2013)
- An early childhood educator was dismissed after her employer saw that she had liked a post disparaging her employers (Hyslop & Truebridge, 2014)

There are also examples of Facebook pages that have been set up to rally support for certain employee groups such as the 'Help Talley's Affco Workers' Facebook page (Facebook, 2016)

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

which has also received much public attention. A quick search on Facebook also reveals a large number of private yet publically searchable employee groups set up for employees to communicate or vent outside of work. The presence of online support groups may indicate a change in the way that employees currently deal with work-related issues or stress. Employees tend to seek social support to reduce work-related stress (Boren, 2014) and using social media platforms may serve as a way to access social support. These groups also demonstrate the rising incidence of work-related conversations taking place outside of the workplace. Social media may now be considered 'the new water cooler' (Kulik, Pepper, Shapiro & Cregan, 2012; McGinley & McGinley-Stempel, 2012; Myers, 2014; Neal, 2012), allowing colleagues to communicate about work and non-work related topics outside of work.

It has been acknowledged that negative posts from employees threaten to undermine the reputation of organisations, and the public nature of posts has become a concern for many employers (Carlson, 2014; Coe, 2015; Davis, 2012; Gonzalez, 2014; Kennedy, 2013; McDonald & Thompson, 2016; Miles & Mangold, 2014; Thornthwaite, 2015; Tufts, Jacobson & Stevens, 2015). Some scholars have perceived work-related venting online as an assertion of employee voice (Holland, Cooper & Hecker, 2016; Miles & Mangold, 2014; Miles, & Muuka, 2011). In response to this risk, organisations often put in place social media policies as a way to regulate employees' online behaviour and these policies often extend to restrict out of work conduct (Miles & Mangold, 2014). This protectionist viewpoint may be guided by an assumption that the intent of negative online posts by employees is solely to disparage employers or to damage the reputation of an organisation. However, this viewpoint may be overlooking alternative explanations or motivations for work-related online venting and understating the role social media plays in enabling employees to cope with work related stressors. Simply forbidding an employee from venting online is unlikely to remove the impetus to vent. This sparked the need to investigate the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook to obtain a better understanding of why it takes place.

### **Aims and Purpose of the Study**

Despite the prolific use of social media and the presence of work place policies that forbid certain types of online conduct, little is understood about the phenomenon of work-related venting on social media platforms such as Facebook and why it continues to take place. Existing research has provided insights on the negative implications of venting behaviours in the employment context and work-related venting is believed to stem from work-related stress (Boren, 2014; Mukosolu, Ibrahim, Rampal, Rampal & Ibrahim, 2015), yet there is a limited understanding of the process or mechanisms that explain the links between these two concepts.



## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is not to ascertain the effectiveness of Facebook venting as a possible coping strategy but more so to understand why work-related venting takes place online. Therein lays an opportunity to examine the relevance of established venting theories and the role of social media in work-related venting occurrences. Thus, the present research aims to address this gap by investigating the intersection between the concepts of venting on social media and venting about work.

This research aims to identify what motivates employees to vent on Facebook about their work to understand and explain why these individuals selected Facebook to vent. This will help extend the current understanding of the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook and the nature of the processes and mechanisms that allow it to occur. Therefore, the following research questions have been proposed, in order to achieve the aims of the study stated above.

RQ1: What motivated employees to vent about work?

RQ2: Why was Facebook selected as the platform to vent?

RQ3: What were the consequences of venting on Facebook?

This study will examine instances where individuals have vented on a social media platform that identifies the comments as belonging to them, rather than websites where users can post anonymously. Anonymous negative comments from an employee about their work or employer have the potential to cause reputational damage, but assumed privacy can make accessing participants through anonymous websites much more difficult. Furthermore, using data obtained from anonymous sites also poses issues around content validation. Whilst examining anonymous work-vent websites may uncover different motivations to non-anonymous venting, it will not be examined within this research.

In regards to the participants for this research, a sample will be taken from a Generation-Y population. In line with the statements pertaining to the high membership rates, usage intensity and reliance on technology for interaction with others, this research will include participants from Generation-Y. This is because they make up a significant portion of Facebook users and frequently use the platform to interact and socialize. Furthermore, this generation's immersion in technology is of particular interest to researchers as it may be an indication of future online behaviour and usage (Bolton et al., 2013). Members of this cohort are likely to be students in part time employment, or relatively recent entrants to the workforce (Bolton et al., 2013). This period of life can be associated with exploration and change due to the life changing decisions and transitions from education to work associated with this period (Ally, Blewett &

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

van Niekerk, 2014) and therefore may present a greater number of stressful experiences worthy of venting.

### **Structure of this Thesis**

This chapter is followed by a review of the existing relevant literature, and will identify existing gaps in knowledge. The chapter relating to the methodology and philosophical assumptions that underpin this research will follow this. The chapter on data collection and analysis will outline the process of how the data was gathered from the research participants and the analysis procedures used to derive the findings of this study. The findings will be presented, followed by the discussion, which includes both the theoretical implications and practical contributions of this research. Lastly, the concluding remarks will outline how the findings provide answers to the original research questions. Limitations and suggestions for further research will be presented.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to thematically review the literature pertaining to venting behaviour and critique its relevance to the more recent phenomenon of venting on social media, while identifying the existing gaps in literature. This literature review will firstly look at traditional venting behaviour and its relationship with managing stress and coping. Following this, social sharing and responses to venting will be examined. This will include exploring alternative purposes for venting such as the role that venting plays in interpersonal communication and relationships. Lastly, employee voice literature will be reviewed

### Venting Behaviour

Significant events or personal experiences can elicit strong emotions or negative affect in individuals, and this can encourage individuals to express dissatisfaction about themselves, other people or their environments (Kowalski, 1996). Venting can be defined as “the release or expression of a strong emotion or energy” (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2016) and can be enacted physically such as hitting a punch bag (Parlami, 2012; Bushman, 2002), verbally (Parlami, 2012), face to face with others, or in written form such as diary writing (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; Parlami, 2012; Petko Egger, Schmitz, Totter, Hermann & Guttormsen, 2015). Furthermore, venting to or complaining to others is considered to be common and important form of social communication (Alicke, Braun, Glor, Klotz, Magee, Sederholm, & Siegel, 1992) and has been explored within communication literature because of its association towards the maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Wendorf & Yang, 2015). Whilst venting is considered a way to express frustration or dissatisfaction, individuals may be also attempting to evoke interpersonal responses by venting to others. These can include empathy, reassurance, validation or support (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Shoss, et al., 2013; Urista et al., 2009), sympathy or approval (Kowalski, 1996; Urista et al., 2009), or fulfilling a personal desire to share information with others (Liebler & Chaney, 2014; Parra-Lopez, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutierrez-Tano, & Diaz-Armas, 2011). As the current research aims to examine the motivations of work-related venting in a social setting online, it is likely that the participant responses will help explain why individuals vent to others online about work and the objectives they hope to achieve.

Psychological relief attained through the expression of strong emotions is referred to as catharsis and often cathartic complaining is derived from its potential to allow a person to feel better (Kowalski, 1996). Catharsis theory suggests that by venting anger, it enables emotional

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

releases, rather than attempting to suppress it anger (Bushman, Baumeister, & Phillips, 2001) thereby reducing anger and subsequent aggression (Aloia & Solomon, 2016). With respect to venting to an audience, the popular view of venting for catharsis may have originated through the fleeting and buffering effect, resulting from having ones thoughts listened to by another person (Nils & Rimé, 2012, Rimé, 2009). However, the empirical evidence to support the propositions of catharsis theory and its ability to reduce anger and aggression is conflicting (Aloia & Solomon, 2016; Bushman, 2002). Several early studies found that contrary to catharsis theory, venting did not reduce anger. Instead in many instances it leads to rumination and higher levels of subsequent anger (Berkowitz, Green & Macaulay, 1962; Bohart, 1980; Wheeler & Caggiula, 1966). Despite the original propositions by Bushman et al. (2001) that individuals feel better after venting anger, recent studies by Goussinsky (2012) and Brown, Westbrook & Challagalla (2005) found that that venting negative emotions was not only positively correlated to negative affect, but that venting and expressing negative feelings to others in fact amplified the adverse effects of negative emotions. Instead of reducing anger, research suggests that venting can increase the likelihood of anger and its subsequent negative consequences (Lohr, Olatunji, Baumeister & Bushman, 2007). Bushman (2002) demonstrated that those who ruminated about an issue reported increased anger and aggression compared to those who attempted to distract themselves. Distraction appeared to be more effective in reducing aggression than venting and as such, directly contradicts the propositions of catharsis theory (Bushman, 2002). However, distraction should not be conflated with suppression of anger, which can also lead to rumination. Because in certain instances people feel the need to refrain from expressing their dissatisfaction, they may become obsessed or fixated with the original event or inflate the existing dissatisfaction (Grandey, 2000, Kowalski, 1996). This may explain why certain individuals might choose to vent, instead of attempting direct energy towards trying to distract or ignore these thoughts or emotions. In fact, it has been suggested that those who chose to release their anger recover faster than those who chose to suppress it (Liu & Roloff, 2016; Roloff & Solomon, 2002). This provides several possible explanations why individuals may choose to vent anger rather than try directing their energy towards attempting to distract or ignore these thoughts or emotions. This also helps demonstrate how venting may enable both short and long term outcomes. Therefore, individuals may also vent because of the belief that they will experience long-term benefits such as preventing further anger accumulation or that it will help them recover faster from their anger, not just because they can experience short-term relief from venting to help reduce anger (Parlami, 2012).

Another possible explanation of why individuals engage in venting is to regulate mood (Parlami, 2012). Whilst often the terms 'mood' and 'emotion' are used interchangeably and are

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

closely related, they remain distinct (Beedie, Terry & Lane, 2005; Lane & Terry, 2000). Emotions such as happiness, anger or sadness are often linked to a personally meaningful circumstance, event or object, can be of greater intensity and often short-lived (Lane & Terry, 2000; Oatley, Keltner & Jenkins, 1996). Conversely, moods are thought to be less intense, objectless and comparatively longer lasting (Lane & Terry, 2000; Oatley et al., 1996) or more easily categorised as either positive or negative. Moods can often involve more than one emotion (Lane & Terry, 2000). Therefore, an individual may find that venting anger can improve their mood because of the possible calming effects of venting anger. Individuals may remain angry, but also feel better than prior to their vent (Parlami, 2012). Findings from Martin, Coyier, VanSistine & Schroeder (2013) and Lohr et al (2007) reported that participants who vented, indicated that they felt calm or relaxed afterwards. Therefore, the accepted notion of venting may persist because individuals may feel better after venting, but not necessarily because venting has successfully eliminated or significantly reduced their anger (Parlami, 2012). This might explain why some individuals believe venting to be worthwhile, because they are immediately reinforced by feelings of calmness in the short term (Martin et al., 2013). Moreover, research has shown that only certain methods of venting may assist in gaining catharsis, rather than all forms of venting in general. Expressive writing as a therapeutic process has been discussed as an effective coping strategy for stress and anger (Donald & Atkins, 2016; Petko et al., 2015; Pennebaker, 1997). Barclay & Skarlicki (2009) investigated whether the cathartic benefits obtained through expressive writing could be beneficial and generalised to when an employee experiences of workplace injustice. The participants of this study wrote about both their emotions and thoughts surrounding injustice and a control group wrote about a trivial topic. After the intervention, the participants who had written about their emotions and thoughts reported a higher level of wellbeing than the control group. These participants also reported less anger than the control group. Therefore, if expressively writing and engaging in reflection about one's thoughts and emotions might positively influence an individual's psychological wellbeing, this has implications for the current study. Expressive writing online may be a constructive strategy to overcome work-related stress or anger and therefore may explain why online venting takes place. The proposition that expressive writing may enable cathartic relief however may not be applicable to venting on social media, because of the presence of a potential dyadic conversational exchange that has the capability to contribute an extinguishing effect or inflaming and rumination effect. Furthermore, the benefits of expressive writing may be limited by the extent to which the individual acknowledges their emotions and engages in reflection and sense making (Kelly, Klusas, von Weiss & Kenny, 2001). Therefore there is a distinction between vents that contain aspects of cognitive processing compared with emotional outbursts (Stanton & Franz, 1999). In some ways, these findings contradict the study by Bushman (2002),

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

which found that continuing to think about stressor increased the anger created by the stressor. Thus, engaging in reflection and sense making is a form of rumination. If writing messages to others is likely to provide psychological relief or enhance wellbeing compared to face to face venting or distraction techniques, it may encourage more individuals to vent on forms of social media such as blogs or online journals. Social media provides a platform where individuals are able to record and share their thoughts and feelings, but the extent to which the post is expressive or descriptive will vary between individuals. These individuals may post descriptions of the context of their circumstances; however they may experience hesitation sharing their emotions publically to an unknown audience. This highlights a gap in knowledge that this study aims to address. Firstly, this study will examine the posts made by individuals on Facebook to gain a better insight to the extent of the expressive or descriptive nature of the content. Secondly, the proposed research questions hope to uncover why an online audience has been selected over an offline audience. Lastly, this research hopes to explain why venters prefer a known audience to an unknown audience.

### **Venting and Coping**

Coping generally refers to the process of adaptively changing ones thoughts or behaviours to manage situations that are psychologically stressful (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Venting, communicating negative emotions and seeking emotional support from others are considered to examples of emotion-based coping mechanisms (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Day & Livingstone, 2001). Folkman & Lazarus (1985) proposed two types of coping: emotion focused coping and problem-focused (or cognitive) coping. Emotion-focused coping aims to minimise the distress triggered by the stressor (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Conversely, problem-focused or cognitive coping is directed at addressing the central stressor rather than the symptoms, and when an individual channels energy towards resolving the issue or planning a course of action (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Goussinsky, 2012). Studies by Goussinsky, (2012) and Martin, Dunleavy & Kennedy-Lightsey (2010) suggested that emotion-focused venting assisted in alleviating negative affect in the short term by either reducing emotional distress triggered by the central stressor or allowing the venter to feel relieved or satisfied after venting. However, following instances of emotion-focused venting, the longer-term consequences for the individual were generally negative (Nils & Rimé, 2012, Rimé, 2009); because the strategy only allowed the venter to temporarily address the negative symptoms whilst the original stressor remained. Despite the previous statements, it is insufficient in explaining why individuals choose to address the negative emotions they are experiencing, rather than the central stressor.

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In theory, attempting to address the central stressor should be more beneficial to an individual as its purpose is to find a solution that eliminates or minimises the issue and prevent the issue and subsequent negative emotions from persisting. However, individuals may choose to vent emotions over attempting to address the central stressor, because of the realisation that a cognitive-focused coping strategy is unlikely to provide reprieve from the negative emotions. Additionally, the individual may perceive that attempting to resolve the issue could cause them to experience further stress if they believe that attaining a solution will be difficult. Therefore, this concept will be examined within the current study by examining the antecedents and circumstances that occurred leading up to a vent. This will provide insights to the decisions made by these individuals prior to venting and allow a deeper understanding of the rationale behind these decisions.

Much of the existing venting literature has explored unidirectional forms of venting as a method of coping with stress. However, several studies pertaining to venting and coping introduced the social aspect relating to venting. Individuals may commonly vent to others about topics of mutual dissatisfaction, indicating venting as a form of social communication and not solely to enable coping. Furthermore, the introduction of social media platforms such as Facebook that are used for communication has encouraged dyadic exchanges between individuals. Online coping has been defined by Folkman & Moskowitz (2004) as thoughts or behaviours facilitated by the internet that are used to help manage stressful situations. Therefore, venting on Facebook may constitute as a method of online coping. Both the socially dyadic aspect of venting and the introduction of social media platforms where individuals can vent, has introduced additional complexities to the venting experience worthy of investigation. This will be addressed within the current study by examining the responses received to the online vent, and how these responses influence an individual's ability to cope.

### **Social Sharing and responses to Venting**

Facebook provides a place for individuals to disclose emotions to others (Naaman, Boase & Lai, 2010). However, the extent that individuals share emotions with others online will vary from person to person. Regardless of the emotion involved, it is believed that individuals prefer to vent to people they knew over strangers (López-López, Ruiz-de-Maya & Warlop, 2014). This notion is relevant for the current study because venting that takes place on Facebook is to an audience that is known to the venter. Relating to the concept of venting as form of social communication, Social Sharing of Emotion (SSE) takes place when a person shares an emotional experience and the events that triggered it with someone else (Nils & Rimé, 2012, Rimé, 2009), and this process is considered potentially beneficial (Hidalgo et al., 2015). Humans are highly

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

dependent on the social support they obtain from others (Nadkarni & Hofmann 2012) and the desire to share emotions with others can be considered a human need, related to emotional expression and social connectedness (Choi & Toma, 2014). This desire to share with others can be amplified when an individual experiences a strong positive or negative emotion (Derks, Fischer & Bos, 2008). In relation to the sharing of negative emotions resultant of negative experiences, Rimé's (2009) SSE Framework proposes that long-term positive effects are able to be attained through the communication emotional experiences to others. If indeed SSE can be enacted through social media platforms such as Facebook to achieve positive long-term outcomes, venting on Facebook indeed may serve as a beneficial way to enact emotional expression and maintain a sense of social connectedness. However, possible positive effects of SSE may not be reached by using Facebook to vent because much of visible content shared on Facebook is superficial in nature (Hidalgo et al., 2015) and it may be unlikely that information posted on Facebook would contain sufficient detail or depth to be deemed an emotional expression.

While social sharing entails communicating emotions to others, it may not be considered synonymous with dyadic venting exchanges, as the goal may simply be to share and not necessarily receive responses. Certain forms of venting are unidirectional such as journal writing but generally venting to another person is considered a dyadic exchange when it encourages and attains a response. Therefore the present study aims to understand the antecedents and motivations for venting on Facebook. For the participants of this research, does venting represent social sharing? Or does it seek to obtain responses? Given that it would not be unusual to want to share emotions and events with peers especially if they evoke strong positive or negative emotions, the present study will seek to obtain a deeper understanding of why social sharing in the form of work-related venting occurs.

Despite the associated negative outcomes of venting such as rumination, inflation of anger or the escalation of negative emotions, the sharing of negative emotions through dyadic venting interactions are believed to be positively related to friendship quality (Duprez, Christophe, Rimé, Congard & Antoine, 2015) which is derived from the bonds created through a shared dissatisfaction. Whilst there are possible positive outcomes for the venter, this fails to take into consideration the effect venting has on the interpersonal relationship. There are implications for the dynamics between individuals or within a group as sharing positive or negative emotions can affect the climate or cohesion for the member's party to the exchange (Yang, 2014). Therefore, while venting and self-disclosure can enable better friendship quality, it can contribute to a negative friendship climate. This highlights a gap in knowledge which will be addressed within the current research. The participants will be asked to reflect on the



## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

consequences they experienced, following their online vent. This will be used to explore whether the venting circumstance had an impact on the friendships or relationships they had with their peers.

Considering venting on Facebook as a process whereby individuals may be attempting to regulate their mood or emotions as a dyadic interaction, it is critical to explore the influence and types of responses that can be received. Research by Zaki & Williams (2013) outlined two types of self-regulation processes: response dependent and response independent, with the former characterised by the reliance of particular qualities of another person's feedback, such as an individual may feel better after venting, but only if the recipient of the vent responds in a particular way. In contrast, the latter does not require another person to respond in a certain way (Zaki & Williams, 2013). What is said in response to vents is crucial and responders should be aware of the influence their response has on the personal outcomes for the venter (Parlami, 2012). Findings from the studies by López-López et al., (2014) and Alicke et al. (1992) acknowledge the influence of the responder and the act of agreeing may have an extinguishing or inflammatory effect on the mood of the complainer, depending on how the response is delivered. The findings from Alicke et al. 1992 revealed that the most frequent response received to venting was to agree with the complainer's statement. Receiving a response where the responder agrees with the statements made could be interpreted in by in several ways and may influence the subsequent action taken by the venter. Responses received to a vent have the propensity to lead to co-rumination, which entails the continual discussion about problems that can enable individuals to revisit and reflect on negative feelings (Duprez et al., 2015). This concept helps demonstrate how responses received to vents can be dangerous if they encourage escalation of the situation or an inflammation of negative feelings. Furthermore, it highlights an unacknowledged reliance the venter may have on receiving responses to help them cope. It is argued that the comments received in response to a vent, or the way it is interpreted by the venter are not able to be predicted, therefore it can hold an indeterminable influence on the outcome that the venter experiences. Parlami (2012) hypothesized that a response which reinforces venters behaviours, would lead to greater anger experienced by the venter than if the response encouraged the venter to reinterpret or reframe the situation. Obtaining an agreeing response may enable the venter to feel validated and feeling validated may help reinforce the venters decision to vent. This is problematic if feelings of validation lead to inflammation of negative feelings and a desire to escalate the issue in a way that will not allow a solution to be reached. However, obtaining validation from peers, gaining sympathy and support may also fulfil the objectives of the venter and they may have no desire to pursue further action. Parlami (2012) hypothesized that responses which reinforced venters behaviour, would lead to greater

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

anger experienced by the vented than if the response encouraged the venter to reinterpret or reframe the situation. Furthermore, the study by Hidalgo et al., (2015) acknowledged the influence the provision of feedback by 'listeners' and its role on attaining long-term positive benefits of SSE. Affective or empathetic feedback can be successful at buffering emotions temporarily (Nils & Rimé, 2012, Rimé, 2009), and required less effort from the responders (Hidalgo et al., 2015). In comparison, cognitive or reframing feedback, is more likely to afford to long-term emotional recovery (Nils & Rimé, 2012, Rimé, 2009), but required more resources from the responder (Hidalgo et al., 2015). Therefore, this will be examined within the present study by reviewing the responses received to the post where available and asking participants to reflect on these responses

The findings from Nils & Rimé (2012), Rimé (2009) and Hidalgo et al., (2015) appear to coincide with the propositions made regarding cognitive and emotion focused coping strategies by Carver & Connor-Smith (2010), Folkman & Lazarus (1985) and Goussinsky (2012), that addressing the central stressor is more beneficial for an individual who is experiencing stress as it aims to eliminate the cause of stress but requires more energy, rather than simply attempt to address the symptoms. Therefore, cathartic relief is a potential consequence of venting on Facebook, provided that responses received do not enable inflammation of negative emotions or co-rumination which leads to further negative affect. Nils & Rimé (2012) suggest that sharing emotions can lead to positive benefits, provided that the listener's response is cognitive focused. With respect to dyadic venting, cognitive-focused coping may be enacted by interacting or raising the issue with an individual who may assist in the solving or rectification of a problem. Geddes and Callister (2007) makes a distinction between recipients of a vent, namely when it was directed towards someone who has the power to enact a resolution, or towards someone who is either uninvolved or removed from the situation. This is significant as the recipient of the vent can help determine the purpose of the vent; to help address the stressor or help address the symptoms of the stressor. In a study by Alicke et al. (1992), college students were asked to keep a diary of complaints they made, the reasons for wanting to express it, and the response it received over 3 consecutive days. 75% of the complaints noted were non-instrumental, meaning that they were not directed at attempting to resolve the complaint. Instead, it was expressed that the reasons for venting were to express frustration or attempts to obtain sympathy. Whilst the study provides little explanation for why the participants chose to vent rather than attempt to resolve the impending issue, it does consider the responses received to venting. Furthermore, this particular study demonstrated a high number of vents were not aimed at problem resolution. More specifically in a work context, Wranik (2011) proposed that venting, in the form of social sharing at work can also lead to escalation of the original issue because most of

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

the time individuals do not vent to the person who angered them. 85% of people surveyed as part of Wranik's (2011) study who were angered at work, would vent to someone at work and this type of social sharing between colleagues generally leads to increased anger within the organisation, (Fitness, 2000). The studies by Alicke et al. (1992) and Wranik (2011) demonstrate that whilst venting to a third party may allow individuals feel better if the response received is reinforcing, it is likely not to reduce negative emotions in any significant way, because it is addressing the emotions rather than for the purpose of addressing the original stressor. Furthermore, a solution is less likely to be reached if the issue is not addressed with those directly involved, and secondly venting to colleagues about work related problems is more likely to encourage forms of co-rumination. Employees may vent to supportive colleagues or friends, and the responder may encourage escalation or inflammation by getting involved in an advocacy role, effectively allowing escalation of the circumstance (Stickney & Geddes, 2016). Parlamis (2012) suggested that those who experience anger and are interested in resolving an issue should go straight to the source, instead of discussing the issues with individuals who are not involved or unable to enact a solution. This is pertinent for cognitive coping strategies, where the venter is better off raising the issues with the source of stress or a person who will help find a solution. It appears that many individuals perceive venting as a way to regulate emotions (Shoss, et al., 2013) and to some extent believe it to be effective in achieving this objective despite the evidence which suggests that cognitive coping strategies are more likely to provide long term benefits, such as the possible elimination of the original stressor. Therefore, within the present study the participants will be asked to reflect and provide rationale for their choice of audience, which will help uncover insights to the objectives for venting on Facebook. Furthermore, it is anticipated that by looking at the end-to-end process of the phenomenon and by comparing the different outcomes experienced by the participants following their venting occurrence, that it will provide some insights into the different mechanisms that allowed certain outcomes or consequences.

### **Employee Voice**

Lastly, literature concerning work related venting and employee voice will be reviewed. Employee voice was defined by Kassing (2002) as an employee's expression of opinions or concerns relating to their organisation. Employee voice may reveal employee satisfaction such as support, suggestions or agreement (Cox-Edmondson, 2006). Furthermore, it can also reveal employee discontent in the form of disagreement or divergent opinions (Cox-Edmondson, 2006). Employee voice is not a recent construct within existing management literature, and has been able to provide empirical evidence supporting its importance for organisations. Employee

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

voice is generally regarded as positive and beneficial for organisations, and that similarly employee silence is detrimental as it may indicate that employees are less engaged with their work or organisation (Donovan, O'Sullivan, Doyle, & Garvey, 2016). Employee voice enables employees to feel a sense of control over the work-related circumstances they experience and helps to help promote an attachment to their role or organisational community (Richards & Kosmala, 2013).

Despite the popularity of social media and the acknowledged challenges it introduces to the employment context, there is very little literature that explores how employee voice manifests on social media platforms such as Facebook. Some scholars have perceived work-related venting online as an assertion of employee voice (Holland, Cooper & Hecker, 2016; Miles & Mangold, 2014; Miles & Muuka, 2011). From the perspective of the employee, comments made online may be regarded as an assertion of voice, a display of an out-of-work persona or be rationalised as a right and a valid way of expressing ones workplace dissatisfaction or general opinions (Liebler & Chaney, 2014; McDonald & Thompson, 2016 ; McGinley & McGinley-Stempel, 2012; Miles & Mangold, 2014). Several existing studies examine social media in relation to employee voice and cover anonymous or pseudonymous online communications such as rant sites (Gossett & Kilker, 2006), blogs or discussion boards (Kulik et al., 2011; Richards, 2008) or non-anonymous forms of online communication such as social media (Holland et al., 2016; Miles & Mangold, 2014; Miles & Muuka, 2011). Only two studies specifically looked at understanding the meaning or purpose behind why employees may vent or engage in discussions online. The study by Klaas, Olson-Buchanan & Ward (2012) examined the possible determinants of alternate forms of employee voice through a review of the literature. Similarly, the study by Shami, Yang, Panc, Dugan, Ratchford, Rasmussen, Assogba, Steier, Soule, Lupushor, Geyer, Guy & Ferrar (2014) attempted to understand the opinions and views of employees by analysing online posts. Neither of these studies undertook a qualitative approach towards understanding why employee voice manifests online from the perspective of an employee, which will be addressed in the current study.

Presumably in response to concerns held by employees regarding possible repercussions for non-anonymous posts on the internet, a number of rant sites have been created where employees can openly and anonymously vent about their jobs (Shoss et al., 2013). These include sites such as WorkRant.com, Ventvent.com and Workrampage.com. Whilst the motivations for using these types of sites may differ as well as credibility of the content, the nature of the posts may yield insights as to how employees express and attempt to manage their responses to workplace events and therefore present an opportunity to examine work-related venting (Shoss et al., 2013). The content of posts on work-rant sites contain a greater number of

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

negative emotion words than positive, suggesting that employees could be using these platforms to express or release negative emotions (Shoss et al., 2013). Therefore this highlights the need to further investigate instances of employee online venting. Accessing participants whose posts are identified as their own will provide valuable insights to the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook. The participants will be able to describe the circumstances that occurred prior to their venting experience, providing an explanation as to why work-related venting takes place outside of the workplace.

Online venting interactions mainly consist of text, and therefore tone of voice, body language and facial cues are not visible (van Ingen & Wright, 2016). This can lead to ambiguities or misinterpretation of the posted content. Therefore the present study will compare the content of the posts with the recollections of the participants to interpret if the post clearly depicts the circumstances of the vent. It is believed that regardless of the goal of venting, it stems from a state of self-focus whereby the venter is made aware of a mismatch between their expectations and what they are experiencing (Kowalski, 1996). This is supported by the findings from Heck, Bedeian, and Day (2005) and Shoss et al, (2013) which suggested that individuals complain about experiences or instances in their workplace which threatens their workplace self-esteem and venter's did not feel they were being treated in ways they felt they deserved, with many of the participants indicating a desire to feel more respected at work. By attempting to silence employee voice on social media through the implementation and enforcement of aggressive social media policies that aim to restrict employee's out-of work online conduct, organisations are failing acknowledge and understand why employees vent on social media about work, which will be explored in the current study.

### **Chapter Summary**

The emergence and development of social networking tools such as Facebook has created alternatives for individuals to share information about work (Schoneboom, 2011). The preceding literature has examined traditional venting behaviour and how the recent introduction of social media can encourage and complicate the act of venting. This literature review has provided an overview of how venting is used as a coping mechanism for stress, as a form of social communication to enable and strengthen interpersonal relationships and the indeterminate effect of obtaining responses to vents. However, the literature also revealed the ambiguity surrounding the effectiveness of venting as a coping strategy and that certain types of venting such a cognitive focused venting were thought to be more effective than simply addressing the negative symptoms of the stressor. Furthermore, this review looked at the current employee voice literature specifically relating to employee voice online. This

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

highlighted that whilst employee venting online is considered an exertion of employee voice and generally employee voice is beneficial for organisations, the literature provides little explanation of why it continues to occur online despite the presence of social media policies that forbid this type of behaviour. Organisations that use aggressive and restrictive social media policies to suppress employee voice outside of work are potentially overlooking the significance of social media as a part of an individual's identity expression and a way to communicate with their peers and address work-related stress.

Employee venting on social media is still an understudied area and little is understood about the types of work-related stressors that precede work-related venting on social media or why employees choose to vent on Facebook, rather than attempting to resolve issues within the organisation. Whilst it is likely that newer forms of social media will rise in popularity as others become obsolete. What is unlikely to change, however, is the incidence of work-related stressors and how employees attempt to deal with them. Therefore, this research aims to address this challenge by firstly seeking to identify what motivates employees to vent about work on Facebook instead of attempting to resolve the problem or venting within their organisation.

There appears to be no current literature addressing work related venting on social media from the perspective of the employee, and therefore the present research aims to contribute to knowledge by undertaking a qualitative study from the perspective of the venter, to understand the motivations context of work-related vents on Facebook. The studies will also uncover the social, personal and work related consequences of venting on social media about work, experienced by the participants

The following chapter will outline the methodology employed to obtain data towards answering the proposed research questions

.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology that has been utilized to address the research questions proposed. This section describes the philosophical assumptions, and provides an introduction to phenomenology. Lastly, this chapter illustrates the role of the researcher for this selected methodology.

### Philosophical Assumptions

When undertaking qualitative research, researchers should begin their inquiry by identifying and reflecting on their personal ontological, epistemological and axiological stance (Creswell, 1998; Creswell et al., 2007), whilst selecting an appropriate research methodology that will achieve the aims and objectives of the study. This is crucial across all types of research, but arguably more so in qualitative research. This is because a qualitative researcher plays an active role in both the data collection and interpretation of the findings, during the research process. The researcher's worldview and preconceptions can influence how research is conducted and the interpretations or conclusions that are drawn from the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lester, 1999). Phenomenological researchers cannot be isolated from their pre-existing beliefs, attitudes or underlying assumptions (Hammersley, 2000) and therefore this kind of bias cannot be eliminated or precluded from influencing the research. However, the research can be conducted in a way that makes the researchers existing knowledge, opinions and values clear and transparent by bracketing existing beliefs and communicating the researchers own personal ontological, epistemological and axiological stance to help readers understand how conclusions have been drawn.

This phenomenological research has been guided by a constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2000). Constructivism argues that individuals construct their own realities in relation to one another, making them both subjective and experiential (Berkeley Graduate Division GSI Teaching & Resource Centre, 2017; Fosnot, 2013; The Human Element, 2009). An individual's perception of an experience may be shared with others, however it can also mean that each individual may experience the same reality in different ways and attribute different meanings to the shared experience. An individual may experience and recall the phenomenon differently to others, yet their recollection is both true and valid. Extending from constructivism, social constructivism is based on the assumption that knowledge is constructed through social interactions with others and the environment the individual operates within and therefore is a shared experience (Berger, Luckmann, Zifonun,

## Chapter 3 – METHODOLOGY

1966; Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, language and culture play essential roles in how individuals perceive the world (Vygotsky, 1978). According to social constructivism, new information is integrated into existing knowledge, essentially expanding one's network of understanding (Draper, 2013).

The researcher's personal ontological position is aligned to a Historical Realist perspective, explained within Guba & Lincoln (1994). Historical realism is built on the assumption that what an individual experiences and how they interpret these experiences and therefore their subjective construction of reality, are influenced by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values that have been formulated over time (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher therefore believes that the behaviour of an individual is influenced by their existing values and attitudes, and in turn will impact on how they perceive their experience. A transactional or subjectivist epistemology is guided by the notion that the thoughts and perceptions of an individual are their personal interpretations of that experience, and essentially that there is no general consensus of a true or shared reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### **Introduction to Phenomenology**

In addressing the proposed research questions a qualitative exploratory and emergent research design was used. Phenomenology as a methodology was first applied to the social sciences by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (Moustakas, 1994; Sage Research Methods Online, 2016). It is a theoretical viewpoint that the phenomenon is determined by the behaviour of an individual and contingent on the context in which they operate, and their values and beliefs. Each of the individual experiences and subsequent interpretations made by a participant are treated as presentations of the phenomenon (Eagleton, 2008).

For those who have experienced a particular phenomenon, there is no single or objective reality, only their individual and subjective experiences and what it means to them (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2005; Patton 2015). This is because each individual will make interpretations based on their underlying values, attitudes, beliefs and previous experiences. Phenomenology is built on the assumption that there is an essence, or essences to a shared experience or phenomena (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990, 2015; Sage Research Methods Online, 2016; Worthington, 2010). Therefore, phenomenological research can enable a deeper understanding of individuals' motivations, behaviours and taken-for granted assumptions (Lester, 1999) by highlighting individuals' differing perspectives of the same experience.



### Chapter 3 – METHODOLOGY

Whilst the phenomenon is the central object of investigation, it requires an individual to describe their experience of the phenomenon (Englander, 2012). By capturing rich descriptions of the phenomenon and its context, (Kensit, 2000), phenomenological researchers aim to recreate the participant's experience so that the reader understands what it is like to have experienced the phenomenon themselves (Creswell et al., 2007; Patton, 2015; Worthington, 2010). Phenomenological research therefore refers to the descriptive study of lived experience from the perspective of the individual (Lester, 1999; Patton, 2015; Sage Research Methods Online, 2016; van Manen, 2016; Worthington, 2010), rather than trying to explain the phenomenon from a theoretical standpoint (Bevan, 2014). This type of research allows the exploration of how individuals interpret their experiences, and how meaning is created from an individual's experience and perceptions (Sokolowski, 2000; van Manen, 2016). Therefore, phenomenological research is well suited for examining emotional or often intense human experiences (Merriam, 2009).

Phenomenology involves 'bracketing' the researcher's preconceived notions about the phenomenon and then collecting data through methods such as interviewing, from those who have experienced the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). The data is then analysed by reducing the data from statements or quotes to themes, and constructing a structural description of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A structural description may include the context, explaining how the phenomena occurred and the conditions that allowed it to present itself (Moustakas, 1994). It is these descriptions that should convey the 'essence' of the phenomena (Creswell et al, 2007).

A qualitative phenomenological research process is both inductive and emergent. It allows ideas and concepts to be identified from the data, rather than imposing existing theoretical structures on the data set. Within the phenomenological research process, the researcher plays an active role in gathering and interpreting the data. Like other types of qualitative research, researcher bias cannot be completely eliminated, yet the researcher can make clear how interpretations from the findings have been formed, given their pre-existing views and ideas (Lester, 1999.) The findings of phenomenological research present details pertaining to the essential structures of a phenomenon, and these do not lend towards direct generalisation in the same way that quantitative research does (Lester, 1999). This is because the presentation of the phenomenon is contingent on the individuals who experience it as well as the context in which it occurs.

### **Research Design**

As phenomenology is concerned with lived experiences, it is appropriate to undertake interviews and gather data directly from those who have experienced the phenomenon it ‘first hand’. The data obtained included both the content of the relevant Facebook posts in instances where individuals have vented about work, and transcript data derived from semi-structured, phenomenological interviews. Unfortunately, not all participants were able to provide the original Facebook post to the researcher. This was due to the respective participants being instructed to remove the post by their respective employers.

A phenomenological research approach aims at identifying thematic commonalities across the participants reflections by analysing the data gathered from the interviews and content of the Facebook posts rather than observing the behaviour of the research participants in the natural setting. For this research topic, observation in a natural setting was not possible.

An inductive and emergent phenomenological methodology was deemed appropriate towards addressing the research objectives, guiding the data collection and data analysis because it attempts to understand the perspective of the individual, the context and the circumstances that allow the phenomenon to occur, as well as acknowledging the individuals’ subjective experiences (Creswell et al., 2007). This methodology assists researchers in understanding the sense making activities derived from an individual’s experience and perception (Sokolowski, 2000). Lastly it allows for themes to be identified from the data set and the flexibility to pursue ideas and themes as they are identified, rather than imposing pre-existing theories or constructs onto the data, which is necessary to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions relating to a given phenomenon.

The findings and insights gained from this research will highlight the implications for management practices and make it possible to address these challenges. Social media research in the employment context is both relevant and necessary due to the prolific nature and normalisation of social media communications. Employment-related social media research is a burning topic of inquiry, because of its relevance in current management practices.

### **Role of the Researcher**

To prevent the use of prior personal knowledge, opinions or attitudes, Husserl (1970) coined the term “bracketing,” which is setting aside what we already know and our personal views or preconceptions (Bevan 2014; Miller & Crabtree, 1992) to avoid making inappropriate or subjective judgements (Groenewald, 2004). This is essential especially in emergent qualitative research when the researcher must attempt to understand the perspective of the participant,

## Chapter 3 – METHODOLOGY

rather than making subjective judgements based only on the researcher's prior knowledge or beliefs.

Prior to undertaking the literature search and conducting interviewing, it was necessary for the researcher to undertake 'bracketing'. The bracketing process included discussing the topic with colleagues and undertaking a bracketing interview to enable the researcher to reflect on their own personal experience of venting on Facebook about work. This was useful in highlighting the researcher's existing preconceptions, namely:

- There would be some kind of negative cataclysmic event which led to Facebook venting;
- That it was likely to be a heated decision on the behalf of the individual;
- The longer term consequences would not have been considered at the time;
- The individuals experienced some kind of regret if there were negative consequences, which would have led them to vent in another way if the same situation were to happen again.
- Furthermore, it was assumed that venting on Facebook would be an indicator of a general dissatisfaction regarding the employees' employment situation, and would lead to turnover intentions.

The bracketing exercise allowed the researcher to approach the research topic and interviews with an awareness of existing personal biases. Furthermore, this awareness mitigated the researcher from imposing these personal biases and preconceptions onto the research participants (Idhe, 1986). Lastly, it was necessary to draw attention to these personal biases so that the researcher could refrain from asking questions that influence participant's responses, avoiding confirmation bias.

### **Personal Biography**

The researcher is a 27-year-old female who was born and raised in Christchurch, New Zealand. Whilst completing her undergraduate degree, through to returning to university to complete her Master of Commerce, she had been employed in several roles for public, local government and private organisations. During one of her previous roles, through frustration of being called in last-minute to cover a colleague who was on planned leave, the researcher took to Facebook to vent her frustrations. Consequently, she was informally reprimanded for her comments, which led to a heightened awareness regarding posting work related content on social media.

## Chapter 3 – METHODOLOGY

Undoubtedly this personal experience played a role in wanting to explore social media-enabled venting about work.

### **Chapter Summary**

The current chapter provided an explanation of the research methodology, the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research and the research design. This chapter described why phenomenology is an appropriate methodology to obtain the necessary data for this research. Lastly, this chapter outlined the role of the researcher in phenomenological research and the purpose of undertaking bracketing to reduce researcher bias. The following chapter will detail the data collection processes and data analysis procedures that were used within the present study. It will also outline the ethical considerations made when conducting this research.

## Chapter Four: Data Collection & Analysis

### Introduction

This chapter will provide an explanation of the data collection and analysis procedures used within this research. This chapter will detail how the participants were selected and recruited, the process of developing an interview protocol and how the interviews were undertaken. This chapter will also describe the analysis procedures used, including the coding strategies employed. This chapter will conclude by addressing the ethical considerations relevant to this research such as informed consent, participant anonymity and data storage.

### Selection of Participants

#### Participant Eligibility and Recruitment

For the purpose of this study, participants had to meet pre-determined selection criteria. Firstly, participants had to be Generation-Y. Whilst there appears to be little consensus on the precise start and end birth years for this cohort (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro & Solnet, 2013), for the purpose of this research, Generation-Y will include those born between 1980 and 1999. For ethical reasons, no individuals under the age of 18 were included in this research. The second participation criterion was that participants must have vented about work on Facebook. Further to meeting the eligibility criteria, participants had to be willing and available to participate in an interview that would be long enough to articulate their personal experiences. The researcher created a Facebook post seeking research participants that was 'shared' with their existing network of Facebook friends. The researcher also encouraged friends to 'share' the post with their friends, to enable access to eligible and willing participants through referrals. Flyers seeking research participants were also put up around public notice boards on the University of Canterbury campus and Christchurch Libraries (see [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#)).

Preliminary screening was undertaken of the eligible and willing participants who had contacted the researcher using a pre-interview questionnaire (see [Appendix F](#)). These participants provided the researcher with demographic information and a copy of their Facebook post where available. The purpose of obtaining this information was so that the researcher could better ascertain which participants may be the most appropriate to interview during the first wave of interviews.

The participants interviewed for this research were aged between 19 and 35, and comprised of six females and four males. Each participant was allocated a pseudonym to ensure

his or her anonymity. The group of participants represented both a wide range of roles and employing industries with no duplication between participants. All 10 participants had completed secondary school education. Eight have completed some form of tertiary education, one is currently studying towards an undergraduate degree one had completed a postgraduate degree, and a further two were completing postgraduate qualifications at the time of their interviews. Lastly, each participant reported circumstances that occurred independently of each other

### **Sampling**

The interviews were conducted in two waves. The participants within this first wave were selected to meet a maximum variation sample, which could be determined by examining the pre-interview questionnaires and selecting participants who were different from each other. The first four participants that were selected to interview represented a variety of ages within the specified demographic cohort, gender, years of work experience, educational levels and employing industries. A maximum-variation sample increases the likelihood that all relevant information will be contributed (Action Research & Action learning for community and organisational change [ARAL], 2012). This is because participants that are different are thought to contribute varying opinions and perspectives.

The first four research participants were asked the same initial questions consistent with the standardized open-ended approach (Turner III, 2010). This was to avoid divergence from the purpose of the research. These initial interviews also acted as pilot tests for the interview protocol (see [Appendix G](#)), giving the researcher the opportunity to reflect on the interview processes, the quality of the opening questions and allowing for these aspects to be refined if necessary. This reflexivity allows for better quality research to be undertaken, by continually allowing the researcher to critique their research practices (Tracy, 2010). After the first four interviews had been completed, on the basis of theoretical sampling the researcher identified the subsequent participants from the pool to interview next.

The second wave of interview participants were selected based on the emergent themes and concepts identified within the first wave. Through the process of coding, several key themes began to emerge including communication and sharing, community, privacy and support. Based on the information provided in the pre-interview questionnaire, the second wave of interviews were undertaken to refine and challenge these initial emergent themes. The second group of participants were asked the same initial questions as the first group. However, this group were also asked several probing questions aimed to further investigate the identified themes and

concepts from the previous interviews. These interviews took a less structured approach in comparison to the first wave of interviews. The probe questions were used to iteratively test and refine emerging theory. The probe questions helped to explain any ambiguities or exceptions from the hypothesized theoretical framework, and allowed the researcher to continue to challenge the emergent ideas interpreted from the data (Turner III, 2010). The strengths of inferences made increases as factors begin to recur across participants (Lester 1999) and by continuing to challenge the emergent theory, this enabled the researcher to demonstrate that the conclusions have been derived from the data, and have survived vigorous attempts to disprove them (Turner III, 2010).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

#### **Interview Protocol**

Prior to conducting the interview an interview protocol (see [Appendix G](#)) and interview notes template (see [Appendix H](#)) were devised. The protocol outlined how the interview would be structured, the information that needed to be provided to the participant, the interview questions and probes and prompts to elicit further clarification or elaboration. The interview protocol also outlined ways to foster rapport, and what to do in the event that the participant becomes distressed. The interview notes template served as a simple way to record brief observations or make memos during and after the interview. This was necessary so that the interview protocol or ideas could be refined or pursued in later interviews.

#### **Interview Approach**

The interviews were conducted using both a standardized open-ended (Turner III, 2010) and convergent interviewing approaches (ARAL, 2012). The former asks identical open-ended questions to allow participants to respond without being influenced by interviewer preconceptions or the views of other participants (Turner III, 2010). The latter allows flexibility and adaptability of the interview questions, and allows the interviewer to probe further into emergent themes. Convergent interviewing is categorised by a structured process and unstructured content, and allows the collection and analysis of data to occur simultaneously (ARAL, 2012). Convergence occurs both within each interview as well as from one interview to the next (ARAL, 2012). Within an interview, questions progress from open-ended to focused and as each further interview is undertaken, convergence is achieved by asking more probe questions that become progressively more detailed and specific (ARAL, 2012). Alternating data collection with interpretation in cyclical and iterative process increases efficiency and validity of

the data obtained, and each interview is an opportunity for questions to be revised to challenge and refine the emergent theory (ARAL, 2012). It is important to note that despite the structured and systematic process of the two aforementioned methods, this does not prevent the interview from being conducted in an informal manner. The researcher endeavoured to be approachable, develop trust, and be empathetic, sincere and receptive during the interactions with the research participants. These attributes were deemed necessary to develop rapport and to elicit open and honest responses from the research participants. The establishment of rapport, trust and empathy was critical to gaining depth of information, particularly where investigating issues where experience might have been particularly emotional for the participant, or that the participant has a strong personal investment (Lester, 1999). Due to the researcher's previous experience, interest and understanding of the research topic, the researcher was optimistic that rapport would be easily established and approached each interview with an open mind. Furthermore, the interviews would be undertaken on the university campus. This would ensure a private and professional, yet comfortable setting to encourage the sharing of the participant's stories.

### **Pre-interview Procedures**

Prior to the interview participants were provided the information sheet outlining the purpose of the research as well as providing the necessary informed consent agreements (see [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#)). The pre-interview phase also served as an opportunity for the researcher to establish rapport with the participants. It allowed the participant to seek clarification to any questions regarding the overall research or the interview procedure as required.

### **The Interviews**

The interviews lasted between 15 and 35 minutes. Each interview was voice recorded with the permission of the interviewee. This was communicated verbally prior to the commencement of the interview, as well as within the information sheet and informed consent forms. The purpose of recording the interviews was so the researcher was able to fully engage with the participant and the conversation, without the need or distraction of trying to write detailed notes. Finally, recording of the interview was necessary for the interviews to be transcribed verbatim.

The interviewees had been informed prior to the interview on the types questions that would be asked, giving them time to reflect on their experience beforehand. This was helpful in refreshing their experience by helping them to reflect upon what happened, and was aimed to help decrease any anxiety related in preparing for the interview.



## Chapter 4 – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Consistent with the process of convergent interviewing (ARAL, 2012), the sequence of questioning was as follows:

1. Introduction and rapport building
2. Opening questions and responses,
3. Probing questions and responses,
4. Summary and closing.

The first wave of interviews (variation sampling group) contained phases 1, 2 and 4, with very minor probing questions to elicit in-depth responses. The second wave (theoretical sampling group) contained all 4 phases. The probe questions included in the later interviews were derived from the emergent themes from the earlier interviews and were used to test an interpretation or explain an ambiguity while constructing the conceptual framework. The probe questions also aimed to help deepen the interviewer's understanding of the phenomena being explored. Interviews continued until the participants introduced no new perspectives or additional meaningful data (Groenewald, 2004), or at least not enough to warrant the time spent on further interviews (Turner III, 2010).

### **Initial Interview Questions**

1. Can you tell me about what lead to your Facebook post?
2. What were the consequences of your post on Facebook?
3. Why did you choose to use Facebook?

The participants were asked to reflect upon their respective Facebook post and the questions asked of the participants aimed to elicit their recollection of the circumstances prior to and following their vent. The questions aimed to provide an explanation of how the participant felt when they wrote the post, the decisions they made and the consequences they experienced. The questions hoped to uncover and expose the participants' behaviours, opinions, values and emotions. This was deemed necessary to obtain an understanding and identify the meaning of their experiences.

The questions were worded in a way that attempted to elicit open-ended responses, with minimal prompts required. This enabled participants to share their stories, in their own words and to communicate relevant information without constraint. The open-ended nature of the questions allows participants respond in as much detail as they desired (Turner III, 2010). These questions help establish the context in which the phenomena took place.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

#### **Method of Analysis**

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) was selected as an appropriate method of analysis to assist in identifying differences and commonalities across the individual recollections by the participants who had experienced the phenomenon in question. Thematic analysis entails identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and themes within datasets, by coding the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to organise and describe the data in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) and to examine the context in which the phenomena occurred (Groenewald 2004). In line with an inductive and emergent research design, a theoretical framework derived from the data will be proposed and discussed.

The writing of notes throughout the interview and analysis process was deemed crucial to help clarify and reflect on emergent ideas. It also acted as a prompt to explore these ideas within subsequent interviews. Memos and notes were taken during or directly after the interview, as well as during the process of coding to allow constant reflection. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed as soon as practicable following the completion of the interview. The verbatim transcription of the interview was emailed to the respective participant for it to be ‘member checked’. This allowed the participant the opportunity to amend their transcript if necessary. This acted as a validity check (Groenewald, 2004) to ensure that the transcripts were an accurate representation of what was communicated during the interview, prior to analysis being conducted. Within this project, triangulating the data was not possible or necessary as this research aimed to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of an individual who had experienced it, and there were no other ways to verify one’s personal construction or interpretation of their experience. However, re-constituted descriptions were provided to the participants upon the completion of the research to determine if they were recognized as a true and accurate representation of their experience, as suggested within Tracy (2010). Following the receipt of the validated transcripts, these were then imported into the software, Nvivo that was used to store the data, and allowed the researcher to perform analysis. Memos and notes pertaining to the interviews and emergent themes were also stored in Nvivo. This process was completed for each individual transcribed interview.

#### **The Process of Thematic Analysis**

To identify commonalities and the essence of the participants’ experiences, thematic analysis was performed on each member-checked interview transcription. The process of thematic

## Chapter 4 – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

analysis of Braun & Clarke (2006; 2012) entails six distinct phases including; familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and lastly producing the report. A more in depth description of this process is available within [Appendix K](#).

Phases 1 to 5 of thematic analysis were adapted to include an iterative process of reading, coding, re-reading and re-coding. Quotes and relevant statements from the transcripts were reduced to themes, to provide a structural description of the participant's experience (Moustakas, 1994). This enabled the researcher to construct a thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). This iterative analysis process allowed the continual identification and refinement of the potential codes and categories. It also encouraged constant reflection so that the research procedures could be challenged and emergent ideas explored further.

The initial phases of analysis involve reading and coding the data. Coding is a process that permits data to be segregated, grouped, regrouped and linked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation (Grbich, 2012). Coding involves deciphering what has been said, as well as putting labels on portions of the text, or categorizing codes, categories and then themes (Grbich, 2012). Several different coding techniques outlined in Saldaña (2015), were used during the analysis process to attempt to identify emergent themes:

- Concept coding - assigning concepts or conceptual categories to data, an idea rather than an object or observable behaviour;
- Emotion coding - labelling the emotions felt by participants;
- Values coding - codes which reflect a participants' values, attitude, beliefs or represent the participants' perspective or worldview;
- Versus coding - identifies comparisons made by participants or contradictions in their responses;
- Verbal exchange coding - looking for routines or rituals, sense making episodes;
- Holistic coding - coding chunks with a few key theme words;
- Causation coding - coding cause, outcome and link or antecedents, mediating variables, outcomes;
- Gerunds - coding for actions or behaviours.

The initial and second cycle codes, categories and emergent themes were derived through several systematic steps. The use of a structured and methodical approach arguably allowed a greater number of concepts to be identified, by applying several coding strategies simultaneously, as well as continually reading and re-reading the data. Firstly, the transcript

was uploaded into Nvivo, read in its entirety and general thoughts and ideas were noted. Re-reading the transcript slowly, line by line, to inductively identify interesting words or key phrases from the text that depicted a particular idea, followed this. The Nvivo software allowed portions of text to be highlighted and dragged into a 'node', which essentially is a virtual bucket where ideas can be stored categorically. The software also allowed relevant titles or labels to be applied to these categories. As the text was read, categories with relevant labels could be created. Relevant excerpts of the text would then be highlighted and placed within the relevant categories. Sub-categories were also created to collect excerpts that related to variations of a particular idea. Memos were also made within Nvivo to explore these ideas further within subsequent interviews. This meticulous reading, coding and note taking process was undertaken several times per line of transcription data, so that excerpts of text which may have represented multiple themes or ideas could be captured and categorised accordingly. Each time a new idea was identified, the transcript was re-read to attempt to capture any relevant excerpts that may have been missed previously and all previously coded transcripts were then re-read and re-coded to the new coding framework. This iterative process of reading, coding, refining the codes and re-reading was undertaken for each transcribed interview and continued until all of the relevant data had been assigned to a category and there was no overlap between the emergent categories.

As more and more interviews were coded, the categories and sub-categories were rearranged into potential clusters to depict possible themes and a hypothesized framework could be constructed from the emergent ideas within the data. Continual checking was undertaken to ensure that the hypothesized themes were consistent with the overall data set. This continued to occur until the ideas could be arranged by theme and subtheme without further alterations. Lastly, the core commonalities of the themes were noted and compelling excerpts representing each theme were selected to include within the findings section of this study.

At times, using Nvivo made it difficult to see the holistic structure of the phenomenon. To counteract this, the researcher noted down the categories and sub-categories on pieces of paper and attempted rearranging them manually in an attempt to visualise the thematic structure of the phenomenon. This also included using large A1 sized post-it notes to draw diagrams and hypothesize linkages between themes.

Appendix I shows the first and second cycle codes, as well as the initial themes and larger categories identified from the data. The significant themes and sub-themes were able to be identified through this process, as well as establishing commonalities across the dataset

## Chapter 4 – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

which helped determine antecedents that enabled the phenomenon to occur. The identified sub-themes highlighted and explained the variation across the participants' experiences.

Principles of rich rigour (Tracy, 2010) outline having an abundance of data to support claims made, as well as ensuring the care and practice of data collection procedures. The interviews continued until saturation had been reached. This was when the research participants introduced no new perspectives or additional meaningful data (Groenewald, 2004), or at least not enough to warrant the time spent on further interviews (Turner III, 2010). The point of saturation was reached after 10 interviews, as no new themes were being introduced, and ideas were fitting into the previously identified emergent themes and the hypothesized structures

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research was completed in accordance with the policies and guidelines set out by the Human Ethics Committee, of the University of Canterbury (UC HEC). Prior to commencing data collection, approval was granted by the UC HEC. (See [Appendix C](#))

Participants were informed of the purpose of the research (See [Appendix D](#)), and were provided with an informed consent agreement (See [Appendix E](#)). Participants were assured of their anonymity, and their confidentiality was maintained by assigning each participant a pseudonym on his or her consent form. This unique identifier was used in place of the participant's name in transcripts and within the sections of this thesis.

In line with University of Canterbury guidelines, anonymous data will be held by the Researcher and Supervisors and used for possible publication in academic research journals or book chapters. No participant would be identifiable in these publications. All research participants were informed that their anonymous data might be used for this purpose.

Lastly, in accordance with the UC HEC guidelines, all data would be stored securely and for the time period stipulated within the HEC application.

### **Chapter Summary**

The 10 participants of this study were recruited via personal networking and advertisements displayed in public notice boards, and undertook a phenomenological interview. The responses received during the interviews were transcribed verbatim, returned to the participants for checking and then thematic analysis was performed to identify themes and construct a

## Chapter 4 – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

conceptual framework. The following chapter will outline the findings of the research derived from the responses received from the research participants.

## Chapter Five: Findings & Observations

### Introduction

The findings of this study will be presented within this chapter, and have been derived from the interview transcript data and content of each participant's Facebook post where available.

This chapter will commence with a table containing a summary of the research participants' demographics. Four independent yet interrelated key themes were identified from the transcription data, which described the essence of participants' experiences and explain the process of work-related venting online. The four key themes included; *Negative emotions, communication with others, sense of community and individual consequences*.

This chapter is structured around these key themes and within each construct; several identified subthemes will be discussed that explain the observed variations between both the antecedents and reported outcomes. This chapter uses the words of the participants to describe the phenomenon they experienced. Compelling examples from the transcribed interviews have been selected to portray the identified themes, and to show the ways in which these themes relate to one another.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS &OBSERVATIONS

### Participant Summaries

Five of the participants reported they were still employed in the same role they vented about. Only three participants\* reported being asked to remove the Facebook post by management, so were unable to provide copies of their post. An additional participant \*\* was unable to locate a copy of her post. An overview of the participants is provided below in [Table 1](#). An in depth summary of each participants' interview and background is provided within [Appendix I](#).

**Table 1: Participant Summary**

Name	Gender	Age	Role at time of Vent
Lina *	Female	26	Hospitality
Hamish*	Male	28	Information Technology (IT)
Michael	Male	27	Accounting and Financial Services
Charlotte **	Female	18	Supermarket Retail
Jack	Male	28	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing
Cara	Female	28	Healthcare
Lucas	Male	23	Construction
Lucy	Female	35	Administration
Alice*	Female	26	Healthcare
Lily	Female	26	Recreation and Sport



### **Negative Emotions: Experiencing Negative Emotions**

Each participant was asked to describe the circumstances preceding and following their vent. All of the participants reported experiencing negative emotions prior to venting, which is not unexpected. Whilst the circumstances that enabled these negative emotions to manifest varied significantly, generally they indicated both dissatisfaction and frustration towards the circumstances they reported. When asked about the circumstances, the participants used negative and descriptive words such as 'draconian', 'disgusting', 'dangerous' or 'resentment' which easily communicated their underlying feelings.

*"I found it was quite draconian and old-fashioned. So basically it was really out of line with how I consider where my profession should be going and how we should be working within that "- Alice, Female 26*

Here, Alice described how she believed the processes and culture within her workplace to divergent from what she had experienced compared to previous roles she had been in. She also believed the work culture she experienced to contradict her own personal opinions of her profession.

Likewise, Hamish also described circumstances that failed to meet his personal expectations of what he believed to be acceptable. During his interview, he reported that his workplace did not have a kitchen sink, and instead were required to tip out any leftover liquids from mugs into what he called the 'slops bucket'.

*"Clearly to anyone it's pretty disgusting, it's pretty unhygienic, it's... and for that type of organisation it would, you know, pretty – even worse. I guess maybe that would fly at a, I dunno, a mechanics garage or something like that"- Hamish, Male, 28*

When attempting to rationalise why the circumstance were undesirable to them, the participants used comparisons to help describe the difference between what they had experienced and what they believed to be acceptable or fair:

*"what I've always experienced when I'm working around dangerous equipment and dangerous environments, is that there's a very high expectation of health and safety so that's what I expected of a brand new business that's being run by someone who has a health and safety reputation and that's why it was just so much more disappointing"- Lucas, Male, 23*

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*“I think there’s some resentment that the Wellington office got to trial the proper standing desks, you know, of varying models and that just wasn’t even a goer for the Christchurch office” – Michael, Male, 27*

These examples communicated both the disparity between the participants’ expectations and experiences, as well as an indication of what was deemed important to them. The underlying message of the vent was that the participant had experienced something that breached their expectations. It was to be expected that each participant reported different circumstances and what may have caused dissatisfaction to one individual, may not have for another. However, each circumstance revealed an element of self-focus and how the problem was a direct threat to the personal interests or wellbeing of the participant in some way. It was believed by some participants that there was a general consensus amongst their other colleagues that the work-related problems communicated during their interview affected many people within their workplace. What was interesting, however, was that none of the participants reported circumstances that they only observed to affect others, or were venting in an advocacy role on behalf of their colleagues. This highlights the aforementioned ‘self-focus’ element relating to the vent.

When asked about the circumstances preceding their vent, participants depicted these in two ways: either the negative emotions were experienced in conjunction with a particular event or circumstance, or the negative emotions were experienced in conjunction with series of events over a period of time prior to the vent:

*“I had to clean up toddler shit from a pool where I had to get in the pool because the vac wouldn’t sink and that was not much fun.” – Lily, Female, 25*

In contrast to Lily, Lina reported a series of circumstances that occurred over time, prior to her eventual vent:

*“It was a couple of months. Yeah. It definitely wasn’t a, you know, this happened last week and I’m venting today. It was an ongoing, you know, things aren’t getting better, I’m really annoyed about this and then eventually just ended up posting.” – Lina, Female, 26*

This indicated the two ways that stress accumulated prior to the participant venting. One depicts a rapid accumulation whereas the other is gradual over time. The finding that a negative event preceded a venting occurrence is not unexpected or novel, yet the participants’ responses reveal the nature of the circumstances that allowed the individual to feel dissatisfied and want to vent. This will be described within the following sections.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

### **Negative Emotions: Attempting to Solve Problems**

When asked about the circumstances prior to the vent, several of the participants communicated attempting to address the problems they faced by raising the issues with their managers:

*“I go to my branch manager and I do complain about her and yeah and he said, so last time, about three, four months ago when I last went to him, he said okay start writing. Keep a notebook of all the times, date and time, the co – times that she’s said, commented on something...” – Lucy, Female, 35*

Lucy had been experiencing tension between her and her team leader, and had brought this to the attention of her manager. Likewise, Hamish had communicated his desire for appropriate break-room facilities:

*“every performance review we’d have, there’d always be like a question like, you know, what can we do to make your job more enjoyable and I guess it may have come across as a joke but I always just say oh and get a kitchen sink and my manager would have a laugh and write it down but wrote it down nonetheless and you know there was a few people who, well a lot of people actually who were getting pretty pissed off about it” – Hamish, Male, 28*

This was significant as each of the individuals who reported trying to resolve the problem, also reported that these attempts were unsuccessful. Furthermore, these failed attempts created an additional source of dissatisfaction, frustration and stress.

*“I’d tried so many times and I’d tried to go through the right avenues and I’d done it several – so I’d gone to the person above me and the person above them and then the person above them and still nothing was getting done so I just got to the stage where I’d had enough and that’s when I posted on social media.” – Lucas, Male, 23*

Some participants attempted to resolve the issues they were faced with, whereas others went straight to venting. The participants’ responses provided an insight into circumstances that occurred prior to these two different behaviours.

### **Negative Emotions: Purging Negative Emotions**

Participants were asked to communicate why they decided to vent. The responses depicted attempts to externalise internal feelings. Participants shared that venting enabled them to temporarily 'let off steam' or purge themselves of the negative emotions

*"As an outlet for my frustration or anger" and "because otherwise I sit and I simmer and I get more, more angry about it and then if I don't get it out I just, yeah it just kind of, eat away at me I guess"- Lucy, Female, 35*

*"It was reaching out and trying, asking for help from anyone that might be able to give it to me and it was a bit of a vent. Like I, I'm very much a venting person. Like if I'm annoyed, angry, upset, whatever, I'll just blurt it out. It's just this was a different mode of doing that. Yeah." – Lucas, Male, 23*

The excerpts above from Lucy and Lucas help portray a sense of urgency to externalise their internal feelings and thoughts. These participants especially, believed that by purging or cleansing themselves of their negative thoughts and emotions, that it would allow them to feel calmer about their situation. For some participants, this reprieve was only temporary and short lived and they continued to experience additional stressors which allowed for further frustration or dissatisfaction. It was likely this occurred because participants were attempting to address the negative emotions they experienced, rather than the original work-related problem. Similar to the previous theme of *attempting to solve problems*, participants reported feeling frustrated that the problem was not being resolved and they felt helpless, trapped or defeated. These same participants also communicated no longer wanting to find a solution to their problem and instead displayed desires to leave their jobs.

*"Got pretty sick of it and no one was able to address it and I felt trapped and then I couldn't work and I didn't even have another job to go to. I just up and quit."- Lina, Female, 26*

*"No, It [Mediation] won't help. Yeah. I'm done. I'm done with the job. I don't want the job anymore. I don't want to work there anymore. I want a new job and I'm trying unbelievably to apply for new jobs" – Lucy, Female, 35*

### **Negative Emotions: Showing Signs of Stress**

In addition to simply saying that they felt frustrated, dissatisfied or stressed, several participants reported experiencing physiological effects of on-going stress. Across the participants, these included exhaustion, reporting increased time off work, having trouble

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

sleeping and even being prescribed anti-anxiety medication. For some participants, the signs of stress were reported for a period leading up to their vent:

*“Like I’d be in the car on the way home and I’d have to pull over and sleep on the way home from Rolleston to Wigram. Like it’s a short drive but I’d be so drained and so exhausted from, from the day of work.” – Lucas, Male, 23*

Lucas disclosed that he was experiencing stress and anxiety at work, because he felt unsafe

*“I just ended up feeling really, really unsafe at work because I wasn’t sure if I was gonna be the next person to die at work. So it was definitely that sense of genuine harm, genuine physical harm coming to me and in this process of me getting annoyed about the health and safety I kind of made myself a bit of an outcast, where the people that were ignoring the health and safety were actually the leaders and they’d get annoyed at me because I wouldn’t do something because I didn’t think it was safe.”- Lucas, Male, 23*

*“I was genuinely concerned for my, for my physical well-being and it just got me so worked up and it just got me so stressed out having to work in that environment where I know what I’m ta – I know what I’m doing and I know what I’m talking about. I’m just getting ignored”- Lucas, Male, 23*

Linking to the previously identified theme of *attempting to solve problems*, the recollection above from Lucas communicated that he had tried to resolve the issues, by raising with his manager but became additionally frustrated that his concerns were not being taken seriously and that no action was being taken.

For others, signs of stress were communicated both prior to and following the participants venting occurrence, depicting a prolonged exposure to work-related stress.

*“I’ve just gone onto anti-anxiety medication in the last week because I can’t sleep – I’m having trouble sleeping. I’m not eating very much. I’m getting anxiety. I wake up at four, five in the morning dreading my alarm to go off cause then I’ve got to, it goes off, I’ve got to get up and drive the hour into work from Rangiora and then deal with her all day and I, it’s affecting me now on a mental and physical level” - Lucy, Female, 35*

*“I think it is, you know, probably affecting my work a wee bit because I was calling in sick more cause I didn’t want to go to work.” - Lucy, Female, 35*

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

This helped depict the severity of how this work-related stress was affecting these participants and helps explain their need to address their negative emotions and stress in order for them to cope. In particular, it was expressed by the participants that they felt by communicating with people they knew to obtain social support, which it would help them cope. Furthermore, these excerpts help portray several of the personal individual consequences experienced by the participants, such as wanting to leave their roles or not wanting to put as much effort into their work. This will be explored further in the following sections.

### **Communicating with Others: Friends and family**

Venting to another person is a form of dyadic communication. Thus it was not surprising that participants' discussed venting as a way to communicate with friends or family. However, it provides some novel insights to the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook by highlighting the significance of venting to a known audience; how the use of Facebook facilitated easy access to this particular audience; how the features of Facebook enabled venter's to communicate with multiple members of their desired audience simultaneously, and lastly the particular strategies used by the participants to communicate their underlying stress and frustration.

It was reported by the participants that Facebook was used to communicate with their friends, family and selected colleagues.

*"a lot of my, probably the majority of my friends, it's a bit sad, are my colleagues and people that I've gone through uni with and we all work in the same role" – Cara, Female, 28*

Furthermore, it was depicted as a way to interact with many people at once.

*"I just vented on Facebook just because it's my best form of communication to a wider audience. It's just like, so more than just the people that I'd see every day. It's like I couldn't really go see my friends" - Lucas, Male. 23*

Thematically, the participants depicted that they deliberately wanted to communicate with people they knew, not to other anonymous individuals which was achieved by using Facebook to vent. It also demonstrated that they wished to communicate their circumstances with people whom they believed had an interest in their personal circumstances and wellbeing.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*"I was just too tired to really do anything so it was just getting it out to family as well, family and friends. Just people that I don't see every day that might be able to help, just, yeah, just a wider audience"-Lucas, Male, 23*

### **Communicating with Others: Using Facebook to Interact**

When asked about why they selected Facebook to vent, the participants reported that a lot of people they knew had accounts. Indeed, Facebook has high membership rates and Facebook friends are comprised of people the user knows, it makes using Facebook an effective way to communicate with people they know.

*"Everyone has Facebook. My grandma has Facebook, you know."- Cara, Female, 28*

Furthermore, Facebook's 'wall' function made it easy to communicate with a large number of individuals simultaneously.

*"It's easier than, than messaging, direct messaging a whole bunch of people. I guess you just want some, some exposure"- Hamish, Male, 28*

*"Because it would reach the most amount of people" - Lily, Female, 26*

When participants talked about their Facebook use, it was reported that Facebook communication was considered to be a normal part of their daily interactions with others. Furthermore, it enabled the participants to share aspects about their day to day lives with their Facebook friends.

*""Yeah, it was more like 'look what I survived today' and I, you know, I looked like shit and look how many, you know, like, 'look how much work's around my neck and I'm still alive' kind of thing. That's what I, and I was like, 'look everyone'". - Cara, Female, 28*

It is possible that the normalisation of Facebook as a way to communicate with others may have meant that participants did not give much conscious or premeditated thought when selecting Facebook to communicate or the content of their post. This links to the previously noted theme of *purging negative emotions*, which communicated a haste to externalise and share negative thoughts and emotions with others, potentially without considering the likely consequences of doing so.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*"Facebook was the way to get, well, to talk to people cause that was just the normal thing that you post on." - Lily, Female, 26*

Participants reported how easy it was to access Facebook through mobile devices. This in turn allowed the participant to address the urgency they felt to express their feelings and circumstances to others.

*"So I can sit on my phone at lunch and I can type this stuff and because I'm just, I'm so angry that I need to get it out somewhere and I go rant to Facebook"- Lucy, Female, 35*

*"I think I put it on Facebook because, like I couldn't really call my friends at the time cause they're all working and stuff and I just needed to have an outlet there and then"- Lucy, Female, 35*

This was expressed by the participants who reported not being able to meet close friends or family whom they would normally vent to, in person.

*"At 1 o'clock in the morning, it's pretty difficult to come across somebody who's going to listen to, you know, you vent your spleen about how hard your day was." - Alice, Female, 26*

### **Communicating with Others: Making Light of Tough Times**

Whilst all participants communicated experiencing negative emotions such as dissatisfaction or frustration prior to venting, the actual contents of the vent did not always reflect or clearly communicate what the participant was feeling. In some instances, humour was used to disguise the extent of the negative feelings:

*"piling boxes on top of boxes on top of file holders seemed to be the only option at the time so I just thought it was a bit of a funny way to show my friends on the social media that people had to get creative in order to get what they want for the standing desks at work because yeah apparently the budgets didn't stretch." – Michael, Male, 26*

*"It was just a, 'haha, guess what I did today'. This is probably something no one else does, yeah... This is entertaining, this'll make you feel – this'll make me – you feel less shit about your day yeah" – Lily, Female, 25*



## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

Some posts were ambiguous, leaving it open to interpretation by the readers. Furthermore, some participants acknowledged that they had deliberately withheld the contextual aspects of the situation when writing the post. The participant used intrigue to attempt to solicit attention or support or to start dialogue with their Facebook friends. The combination of the post and the description provided by the participants provided a much clearer depiction of the circumstances than just the post alone. This demonstrates the disparity between the thoughts or feelings of the participant and what they actually communicated.

*"I had a horrible shift and I had written something about how I needed a bottle of wine". – Alice, Female, 26*

*"It's not like I'd given any real context. It's not like where I work is posted on my Facebook page. It's not that I'd said, you know, I work in this place and it's so crap that I have to drink X amount of, you know, alcohol to try and dull the pain. You know, that they just assumed that it was based on the fact that everybody else was in the same boat where work wasn't particularly pleasant at the time" – Alice, Female, 26*

Given the nature of written communication and the lack of visual and audio cues such as tone, facial expression or body language, it can allow the possibility for written messages to be interpreted by receivers in ways other than intended by the sender. In these instances, this appeared deliberate. Is it possible that ambiguity was also used because Facebook is not anonymous and therefore by not disclosing contextual details about a work-related circumstance, it may attempt to protect venters if their post comes into question by their employers.

### **Communicating with Others: Fostering Bonds with Others**

Participants displayed the use of several strategies when interacting with their peers. This included using common interests or topics that others would find relatable, sarcasm, seeking advice, or sharing their unusual work-related circumstances. Participants believed that their post would be something that their colleagues or peers could identify with; such as that experiencing a tough day was something that was relatable to others:

*"Cos they've all felt the same way. You know, not even – even my profession, you know, every job I'm sure would have days like this and everyone's, everyone can relate I think to having a crappy day." – Cara, Female, 28*

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*“Most people said something to like the effects of yep, I understand how you’re feeling, that kind of thing. Like generally the sort of the consensus was that it had been, like from work colleagues, from other work colleagues, was that it had been like a fairly miserable sort of week and that everybody was sort of feeling that same way and I guess that’s, you know, what I wanted was some kind of feeling of validation which is what I effectively got when other people said yes it’s been shitty” - Alice, Female, 26*

The culture of acknowledging information shared on Facebook has become norm and the features of Facebook that allow participants to ‘like’ or respond to posts made it easy for peers to acknowledge what the participants had shared on their Facebook wall.

### **Sense of Community: Interacting with Friends or Family**

The theme of Community emerged from the participants’ responses, with several sub-themes including *communicating with friends of family, wanting and seeking support, obtaining responses and feeling empowered.*

Overall, it was acknowledged by the participants that their Facebook friends were comprised of people they knew to some extent. The term ‘familiarity’ was selected to describe members of the participants’ Facebook friends. This is because the participants reported that their Facebook friends consisted of individuals such as family, friends, and in some cases colleagues.

*“Well I think that’s the thing when you post ‘cos obviously a lot of my, probably the majority of my friends, it’s a bit sad, are my colleagues and people that I’ve gone through uni with and we all work in the same role across New Zealand so we’re all very familiar with, like this is just a classic example of everyday kind of occurrences for us so I guess you’re venting to people that have been in the same position as you and they kind of understand.” – Cara, Female, 28*

Furthermore, the strength of the connections between the participant and their Facebook friends were not reported as homogeneous. Some were close friends, whereas others were individuals they knew peripherally.

*“One of my friends, that’s the technical term I believe Facebook uses, one of my Facebook friends, the type of person that you’d probably stop and say hello to in the street but you wouldn’t, you know, Facebook message them or Facemail them daily. Acquaintance type sort of thing.” – Hamish, Male, 28*

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

The participants communicated that they did not consider all their Facebook friends to be people that they maintained a strong friendship with offline, indicating the varying levels of friendship or acquaintanceship evident within a social network. What was interesting, however, was that while members of a user's Facebook friends was likely to contain many of the strong offline friendships the participant held, it was likely to contain many more weak-tie friendships than what may be expected offline. This will be explored within the following sections, to attempt to obtain an explanation why these individuals selected Facebook to vent.

### **Sense of Community: Creating a Community**

The ability to self-regulate the inclusion and exclusion of individuals from the participant's social network was also significant. This allowed the users to construct a community of other individuals whom they wanted to interact with. This depicted a sense of exclusivity. The participants communicated the considerations they made when deciding who to include or exclude from their self-constructed network:

*"I am friends with on Facebook are people who I do confide in at work who I count as friends"-Lucy, Female, 35*

*"I'm very particular about who I add as a friend on Facebook from my work cos I generally "will only add people that I know I trust who won't go back to my, my immediate supervisor and say Lucy said this or Lucy said that"- Lucy, Female, 35*

Both trust and reciprocity were considered when allowing individuals from a work context to enter and view aspects of the participant's personal life. On the other hand, some participants acknowledged that they did not have connections with colleagues outside of work, via Facebook.

*"I'm not really friends with anyone at work so no one from work would've seen it – Jack, Male, 28*

*""[my older colleagues] they have Facebook and I'm not friends with them" – Charlotte, Female, 19*

One participant communicated that when she gained a promotion, she removed several colleagues from her Facebook network. This helped demonstrate possible shifting perceptions of who to include and exclude from a self-constructed network and how a change in context may mean that certain people may now be excluded from an online social network.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*“When I started in my new job I went through and deleted heaps of people. Like heaps of people. I was really ruthless about it as well”- Alice, Female, 26*

Despite this perceived control over the inclusion or exclusion of members of their Facebook social network, in several instances, the posts were shared with individuals outside of the venters social network.

*“I think either, I don’t know if I was friends with her on Facebook but we had mutual friends so I think maybe like a mutual friend had seen it and maybe liked it or whatever and that might’ve brought it up in her news feed, that she was able to see it.”- Lina, Female, 26*

*“She saw it and her father was involved in facilities at this place and so she showed her Dad. Her Dad brought it to my manager’s attention.” Hamish, Male, 28*

Not all participants experienced a breach of trust like having their post reported to a manager. However, the participants whom experienced this breach were also the ones who also communicated re-evaluating who they included and excluded from their social network.

### **Sense of Community: Wanting Support and Seeking support**

Participants reported they posted on Facebook with the anticipation that may receive acknowledgement or recognition from their Facebook friends. This highlights not only their desire for a response from others, but the types of responses they were seeking and the purpose it would fulfil:

*“So I was probably more just venting frustration and maybe hoping that, you know, someone else would’ve been in a similar situation and maybe would give you advice or even offer their sympathetic ear, you know.” – Lina, Female, 26*

The vents were used to encourage responses that would provide sympathy or advice. Other participants aimed to obtain validation from their Facebook friends:

*“I was in a really bad headspace and I just wanted to essentially whinge and get someone to sorta say that my, sort of my concerns were well-placed. – Lucas, Male, 23*

Essentially, venting to an audience in a deliberate attempt to obtain responses was portrayed as a support seeking strategy.

### **Sense of Community: Obtaining Responses to regain Self-Esteem**

When asked about the messages received in response to their post, every participant reported receiving one or more responses from members of their Facebook friends. The features of Facebook allow responses to be provided in various ways including 'liking', 'reacting' or posting comments beneath the original post.

*"Maybe a few of my friends who were already in hospo, you know, wrote something along the lines of, you know, "Welcome to hospo mate," or, "That's what you get," or something or rather"- Lina, Female, 26*

The comments received in response to the vent generally indicated the provision of support, acknowledgement, empathy or validation to the venter. However, it highlights the varied and unpredictable nature of the responses. Whilst the participant reported that they aimed to obtain responses which would enable them to feel validated, the study was unable to ascertain the intentions or motivations of the responders.

*"There were a lot of lol's, that type stuff. A few people saying that's [slops bucket] disgusting. Just that sort of stuff"-Hamish, Male, 28*

*"I think most of them was just like, "Oh look, you still look all right [after a long day]" – Cara, Female, 28*

In particular, the responses above indicated the superficial nature of the responses and did not result in on-going conversations on the participants' Facebook wall. Only one participant's post created on-going dialogue between the venter and their friends. Lucas' initial post received 15 comments between himself and his Facebook friends that discussed his circumstances. Copies of the Facebook posts are available within [Appendix I](#).

Only two of the participants indicated that they hoped that the responses they obtained would provide advice or suggestions of how to deal with the problems that were causing them stress, however this was not directly communicated within the post.

*"It was never going to solve the issues at work. It was more just as looking for something else" – Lucas, 23*

It was observed that several of the posts were communicated in a way that encouraged responses, either by attempting to elicit sympathy or by communicating the circumstances in a cryptic way and by using intrigue to elicit responses from Facebook friends.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

*“And it’s not like I’d given any real context. It’s not like where I work is posted on my Facebook page. It’s not that I’d said, you know, I work in this place and it’s so crap that I have to drink X amount of, you know, alcohol to try and dull the pain.” Alice, Female, 26*

### **Sense of Community: Feeling Empowered**

Overall, the responses tended to agree with the venter and types of responses reported were not aimed at defending the organisation or encouraging the venter to critically reflect their behaviour or the circumstances, which helped depict the superficial nature of the responses and dialogue between the venter and the responder.

However, obtaining responses, even superficial ones, may have enabled the venter to feel empowered. These participants reported feelings of satisfaction and empowerment, when their Facebook friends agreed or provided them with messages of support.

*“There’s a little bit of vindication, like yeah you know, like other people sorta agree that piling boxes on top of file holders is probably not the optimal way to arrange your own standing desk but yeah. Just a little bit of vindication like you know, smug satisfaction I guess you could call it. Yeah.” Michael, Male, 27*

*“I guess that’s, you know, what I wanted was some kind of feeling of validation which is what I effectively got when other people said yes it’s been shitty”. - Alice, Female, 26*

None of the responses reported or viewed on the posts were negatively oriented towards the poster, blaming them for the circumstances they were had experienced. This was particularly interesting as it demonstrated the biased nature of these replies to agree with the venter. The participants may have used these superficial responses of agreement to boost their self-esteem.

### **Individual consequences: Wanting to Leave**

Two negative individual consequences were communicated through the participants’ responses. Participants reported wanting to leave their roles or felt that they no longer wanted to exert additional effort into their work. Similarly, some participants reported exerting less effort at work than before.

Prior to the interview, the participants were asked to fill in a pre-interview questionnaire (see [Appendix F](#)). The participants indicated if their venting occurrence took place in their

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

current or a previous role. Several cited that they were no longer in the same positions and some felt their social media venting affected their ability to stay with their employers whilst others felt no effect on their employment.

*“They [the work-related stressors I felt prior to venting on Facebook] were a direct reason as to why I left...I guess it was a particularly difficult facility to work in in terms of their overall policy and governance wasn’t actually directed towards patient care, rather towards, I guess, paper-driven outcomes which is not a way that I like to do the job that I do. So I found that particularly frustrating...it was also to do with other things like nurse to patient ratios was really poor, medical team consultation with staff was really poor. Pretty much I would say everything about it was poor. Staff who had obviously been there for a really long time were clearly quite burnt out and quite...And I guess in terms of a wider environment, they were quite racist particularly with like indigenous people and that didn’t really sit very well with me. I found it was quite draconian and old-fashioned. So basically it was really out of line with how I consider where my profession should be going and how we should be working within that so that was basically why I left, yeah.” Alice, Female, 26*

*“Got worse even because they, the other two managers obviously knew that I was venting my frustration but instead of addressing the issue they just got kind of annoyed about it and you know, it all continued and I eventually ended up quitting....Probably, probably only like six months you know. Got pretty sick of it and no one was able to address it and I felt trapped and then I couldn’t work and I didn’t even have another job to go to. I just up and quit.”- Lina, Female, 26*

Table 2 and 3 indicate the participants’ current job status, their turnover intention. Table 4 depicts job status and turnover intentions. It was identified that there were participants whom experienced turnover intentions and subsequently left their roles, as well as participants whom experienced turnover intentions but remained employed. The latter group of participants communicated wanting to leave, but some had not secured new employment. Lastly, it indicated that simply experiencing negative emotions relating to work such as frustration and dissatisfaction did not always necessitate a desire to leave. It may have been that in some circumstances, venting was constructive in helping the participant cope.

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS &OBSERVATIONS

**Table 2 Current Job Statuses**

*\*Indicates participant who was spoken to by manager, regarding post*

<b>Still in Job</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Cara, Jack, Michael, Lucy, Charlotte
	<b>No</b>	Lily, Hamish*, Alice*, Lina*, Lucas

**Table 3: Turnover Intention**

<b>Influence on intention to leave</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Lucy, Charlotte, Alice*, Lina*, Lucas
	<b>No</b>	Cara, Jack, Michael, Lily, Hamish*

**Table 4: Current Job Status + Turnover Intention**

<b>Influence on intention to leave</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Alice*, Lina*, Lucas	Charlotte, Lucy
	<b>No</b>	Lily, Hamish*	Cara, Jack, Michael
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
		<b>Still in job</b>	



### **Individual consequences: Feeling Disengaged**

Participants who expressed turnover intentions but were unable to leave their roles communicated how they felt about their contribution to their roles:

*"I'm probably not giving the best customer service because I hate my job." –  
Charlotte, Female, 19*

*"Yeah I'm not going above and beyond to do something where I normally  
would... I'm not rude to customers on the phone or rude to anyone but at the  
same time I'm not, I'm like not following up on something as quickly as I, maybe  
I should or I just, I said to, like, my branch manager that I think it is, you know,  
probably affecting my work a wee bit because I was calling in sick more cause I  
didn't want to go to work." Lucy, Female, 35*

One exemplary participant response communicated a reduction in the effort she put into her job. Relating to one of the earlier themes of *indicators of stress*, which included exhaustion, increased time off and trouble sleeping, for some participants these translated to disengagement or absenteeism from work.

*"I'm still doing it, I'm still meeting all my dates, doing the month and all my  
health and safety dates and doing everything to my 100% but I just don't care  
anymore"-Lucy, Female, 35*

Employee disengagement and employee stress are generally regarded as negative for the organisation and teams, and therefore strategies that aim to reduce the likelihood of employee disengagement is likely to be beneficial to the organisation, and by extension the employees.

### **Summary of Findings**

The analysis process has provided an insight to the participants' experiences, from their perspective. Four key themes have been identified from the participants' responses; *Negative emotions, communication with others, sense of community and individual consequences*. The identification of these key themes has been necessary towards developing an understanding of the process of work-related venting on Facebook and how and why the phenomenon occurs.

The following chapter will discuss the findings of this research and provide interpretations of what motivated these individuals to vent about work, why they selected Facebook and the consequences of venting on Facebook. This chapter will also highlight the

## Chapter 5 – FINDINGS &OBSERVATIONS

theoretical implications and practical contributions as well as providing suggestions to address these challenges. Lastly, the concluding remarks will answer the original research questions.

## Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings & Implications for Practice

### Introduction

The purpose of this research was to develop a deeper understanding pertaining to the phenomenon of venting about work on Facebook. The interview responses have provided key insights to the phenomenon, outlining the circumstances that occurred prior to venting, what these individuals hoped to achieve by venting on Facebook and the outcomes they experienced following their vent. Venting has been explored as a means to cope with stress and the literature has suggested that individuals will enact support-seeking strategies that will enable them to cope. The literature also alludes to why individuals utilize online communities for coping, to obtain additional social resources. However, the literature had not previously examined specifically why this occurs in a work-related context. This research was not undertaken to ascertain the effectiveness of Facebook venting as a coping strategy, but to understand why it takes place.

The participant responses helped identify a key antecedent of the phenomenon: negative emotions relating to a work-related circumstance or circumstances occurring over time that created feelings of marginalisation. However this alone was insufficient in explaining occurrences of the phenomenon. It was interpreted that venting on Facebook was a response to both feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation at work. This provides a holistic explanation of how the phenomenon occurred, despite the different observed behaviours preceding phenomenon. Furthermore, the individual outcomes differed amongst the participants and this chapter will interpret and discuss these observed variations.

This chapter will discuss how the interaction of the key themes allowed the phenomenon to occur, present a conceptual framework and outline the theoretical implications and practical contributions of this research. This chapter will conclude by explaining how the findings provide answers to the original research questions.

### Discussion of the Phenomenon

#### Antecedents and Motivations to Vent

As highlighted within the literature review, Kowalski (1996) believed that venting could occur when an individual realises a misalignment between their circumstances and the participant's subjective expectations. The analysis found that the *perception of a problem*, categorised by a misalignment between the participant's expectations and experience as well as negative

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

emotions was a consistent theme across all participants. Each individual held subjective beliefs, values and opinions formulated over time and through exposure to different experiences, consistent with a constructivist paradigm. These viewpoints undoubtedly played a role in determining what each individual perceived as problematic. With respect to online venting, findings from Zhang (2017) found that stressful events predict intentional self-disclosure on Facebook and the act of sharing intimate circumstances with others could buffer the deleterious impact of stress. Each participant identified a problem and experienced dissatisfaction, frustration and stress; however, it is unclear which occurred first. The mismatch between expectations and experience stems from a state of self-focus (Kowalski, 1996), where the individual feels they are not being treated in a way they deserve, and more specifically in a way that threatens their workplace self-esteem (Heck, Bedeian & Day, 2005). Across the participants, these perceived work-related problems fell into 3 main categories: unsatisfactory culture or working environment (Lucas, Michael, Hamish and Alice), unsatisfactory treatment from co-workers (Charlotte, Line and Lucy) or unsatisfactory work related event or circumstance (Cara, Jack and Lily). Consistent with the literature, these work-related problems posed threats to the individuals' interests or wellbeing. Several participants communicated a consensus from other colleagues regarding the problems they expressed. However none of the participants' vents were about an observed injustice on others or were experienced second-hand. The responses demonstrated that these individuals vented about issues affecting themselves and possibly others, but not about issues affecting others only. Therefore, these participants demonstrated threats to personal wellbeing as an antecedent to their vent.

The *perception of a problem* was a key theme that preceded all of the participants' vents about work on Facebook, making it an integral antecedent to the observed venting. However, dissatisfaction and frustration alone was insufficient in explaining the phenomenon of venting on Facebook. The observed behaviour variation of the participants through a series of subsequent decisions provided insights to other contributory factors that help explain how the phenomenon occurred. Kowalski (1996) argued that an individual will weigh up the gains and costs associated with deciding to vent, or to take another course of action. However, this oversimplifies the decision process undertaken by the participants. Prior to venting, participants decided whether or not the problem could be rectified, and then whether or not they would attempt to resolve it. Due to a perception that a resolution may be possible, several participants made attempts to resolve the problem prior to the vent. These participants reported raising the issue with their respective managers whom they believed could solve or help solve the problem. To provide some context: Lucy was experiencing stress at work due to friction between herself and her team leader; Lucas had identified and raised health and safety

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

breaches at work and Hamish had raised the need for better break-room facilities and for the 'slops bucket' to be replaced with a kitchen sink. These three participants experienced failed attempts to resolve their identified problems, became additionally frustrated and vented on Facebook. For the individuals who experienced failed attempts to resolve their problems, the subsequent frustration and the passing of time was interpreted as an *accumulation of pressure*. For the individuals who experienced a one off event, this allowed a similar accumulation of pressure but over a condensed timeframe. Both scenarios indicate that sufficient negative emotions were experienced for the participants to reach their 'tipping point' when the vent occurred.

In comparison to the group that first attempted to solve their identified problems, some of the problems reported by other participants did not have a solution that could be attained, or that the problem was not something that could be solved retrospectively. For example: experiencing a stand-alone exceptional circumstance such as cleaning up faeces from a swimming pool as a lifeguard; a particular day where your team was understaffed due to sick leave, or being locked in at work due to other colleagues' strike action. These participants experienced frustration and dissatisfaction relating to their circumstance, but were unable to resolve the issues so subsequently vented on Facebook. Responses from participants indicated employees were likely to forgo attempts to resolve issues if they perceived their manager did not have the ability to enact a solution.

The last observed behaviour was a group of participants who believed a solution was attainable but made no attempts to reach a solution. These participants communicated they had observed failed attempts by colleagues to solve the problem and therefore did not see value in actively pursuing a solution. Therefore, despite the different ways the vent was arrived, it demonstrated several decision-making steps undertaken by the participants. The last decision prior to the vent occurring was that the participant no longer sought a solution and decided to turn their energy towards addressing the negative symptoms they were experiencing. Attempting to solve a problem or attempting to address the negative symptoms of a problem are defined as cognitive and emotion focused coping strategies respectively (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Whilst pursuing a cognitive coping strategy is likely to require more time and energy from the individual, if successful it will address the central stressor and the subsequent negative emotions. Emotion focused coping strategies require less energy and can provide faster reprieve from negative emotions if successful. However, addressing emotions will only mask the symptoms of the stressor, whilst the original issue persists. Upon experiencing negative emotions, participants' behaviours indicated the type

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

of coping strategy they employed; either emotion focused or cognitive, arrived through a process of decisions pertaining to the likelihood of a solution.

The participants also demonstrated the ability to re-evaluate coping strategies. Following failed attempts to reach a solution, participants abandoned further attempts to solve the problem. This signified a change from cognitive coping strategy to an emotion-focused strategy. What has been interpreted is that the participants decided not to invest further energy into pursuing a solution and to instead turn their focus to addressing the negative symptoms of the stressor. This is significant because it demonstrates that individuals are able to change coping strategies if a particular strategy is unsuccessful, but that the change may not necessarily enable them to achieve the same objectives such as solving the problem. It was also observed that in all but one of the participants' experiences, once the cognitive coping strategy had been abandoned it was not revisited again. The exception here was Lucas whom after venting attempted one last time to raise the Health and Safety concerns with the CEO of his organisation, bypassing his manager who had failed to act.

The findings support the proposition that venting was used as an emotion focused coping strategy, once the participant believed they were unable to solve the problem causing distress. Furthermore, the purpose of venting on Facebook was to obtain additional social resources, because of inadequate support structures or ways to address work-related stressors available in the workplace. Therefore, using Facebook to communicate their circumstances with people outside of their workplace would help achieve this objective. This highlights the significance of in-organisation support networks for employees to help each other deal with work related stressors, as well as having ways for employees to express and have their concerns acknowledged by their managers.

The most obvious rationale for venting was as a way to express negative emotions such as frustration and dissatisfaction. However, not all participants appeared to experience high levels of stress or dissatisfaction, raising questions as to why they vented. The participants' responses provided insights to alternative objectives for using Facebook to vent and indeed depicted venting as a form of social communication. The literature outlined how venting can be undertaken in a unidirectional way or in a dyadic way to another person or audience. Whilst venting to another person does not necessitate a response, it certainly increases the likelihood of receiving one compared to the participant venting without an audience. Furthermore, the responder may feel obligated to acknowledge and respond to the venter. Believing that they are likely to receive responses if their vent is directed at an audience, the venter may deliberately vent to others in an attempt to evoke responses. Additionally, obtaining responses to a vent has the ability to influence the outcome experienced by the venter. Because of this, venting to others

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

is deemed a response-dependent coping mechanism whereby the outcome is contingent on the response received from the other person (Zaki & Williams, 2013).

It has been interpreted from the responses that venting on Facebook served several purposes: support seeking behaviour to obtain additional social support online, to make up for a perceived deficit of support from work and non-work offline networks, as well as a means of social communication to maintain interpersonal relationships online. Social support has been defined by Brownell & Schumaker (1984) as an exchange of resources between two or more individuals, to enhance the well-being of the recipient. Similarly, emotional support seeking behaviour entails the extent to which an individual reaches out to peers for empathy or sympathy (Goussinsky, 2012), or maintains or creates social bonds (Wranik, 2011). Furthermore, social support provides individuals with coping resources to help them address negative emotions or stress. Individuals are able to use Facebook to obtain social support as it gives the venter access to their self-regulated community. These online communities can help individuals cope with stress, by providing support if they have experienced similar stressors (van Ingen, & Wright, 2016). It may be that simply sharing an opinion and fulfilling the need to be heard can be cathartic, resulting from simply having ones thoughts listened to by others (Nils & Rimé, 2012) Furthermore, it has been suggested that reassurance provided by peers helps strengthen an individual's self-esteem (Pentina & Zhang, 2017). Therefore, venting can serve dual purposes; attempts to relieve negative emotions as well as attempting to obtain social support help an individual cope by enhancing self-esteem.

The purpose of Facebook has been to enable connections between individuals and data indicated that the participant's respective Facebook social networks were comprised of individuals with whom they were familiar. The ability to control the inclusion or exclusion of certain individuals was an influential factor that may have allowed participants to feel a sense of control over content they shared and subsequently comfortable sharing their experiences online. Every day, users share information on Facebook to help contribute towards positive relationship maintenance with others. Furthermore, close relationships are linked to wellbeing and these relational support functions are fundamental for an individual to thrive (Feeney & Collins, 2014). However, the content of what is being disclosed can affect how individuals are perceived by others. Despite the cultural norm of social media posts to be positive (Reinecke & Trepte, 2014), there is a prolific amount of negative content posted on social media. The present research aims to understand the underlying messages and objectives of work-related venting on social media. Negative self-disclosure is associated with a lower level of social attractiveness, and it is often considered less appropriate for individuals to disclose negative aspects about themselves (Bazarova 2012).

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Despite this, the participants' responses indicated that venting on Facebook served as a way to strengthen social connections by self-disclosing negative information and communicating this in a way that encourages responses that may provide social support. Self-disclosure can also take the form of SSE, which takes place when a person shares an emotional experience and the events that triggered it with someone else (Rimé, 2009). Venting about a circumstance that has caused an individual distress, may allow them to feel vulnerable. If sharing information about the negative circumstances can help an individual to cope in addition to helping maintain interpersonal connections, this provides an explanation why individuals chose to vent to people they know rather than on an anonymous online forum. Venting and complaining has become a widespread method of social communication (Alicke et al., 1992), and reciprocal sharing about mutual topics of dissatisfaction is thought to be related to friendship quality (Duprez et al., 2015). The venters indicated a belief that experiencing work-related stress or frustration was a concept that would be widely relatable amongst their peers. Mutual interests are an essential element of reciprocal relationships, and venters hoped that communicating their relatable experiences would elicit responses from their peers. Venting on Facebook therefore allowed the participants to self-disclose information and encourage dyadic conversations in order to maintain social connections. Furthermore, sharing a circumstance which has caused frustration or dissatisfaction can be a way of communicating vulnerabilities, which could be considered another strategy to maintain interpersonal connections. This helps highlight and explain the perceived importance of venting to an audience and to receive responses that provide gratification or enhance the venters self-esteem.

Facebook has high membership rates and enables social communication with multiple individuals simultaneously. It has been interpreted that venting on Facebook is one possible method of coping when dealing with work-related stressors and in fact enables users to employ support seeking behaviour. Using Facebook allows access to a high number of individuals which enables the venter to accumulate social support, additional to the support obtained by face-to-face interactions. Social support accumulated via Facebook is thought to positively contribute to wellbeing (Zhang, 2017). By using Facebook, the venter is able to obtain a greater level of social support than if they vented to one person at a time. If individuals are able to accumulate a greater level of coping resources such as social support, it can help in reducing negative mental or physiological symptoms and increase well-being, as communicated in the literature by Lett, et al (2007). Therefore it has been interpreted that the purpose of venting to others on Facebook, was to obtain a higher level of social support than venting face-to-face which would enable the individual to cope with work-related stressors; as it requires marginally less effort to interact with many people at once.



## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Literature by López-López et al (2014) found that regardless of the emotion involved, participants in their study preferred to vent to people they knew over strangers. Individuals may feel more comfortable venting to a known audience rather than an anonymous audience. While the strength of the relationships on Facebook between users is not homogeneous, Facebook does allow access to a higher number of these strong relationships simultaneously. An advantage of using an online network for coping with stress is that a social network provides access to a larger number of individuals (van Ingen, & Wright, 2016). However, the large size of an online social network is not an indicator of strong interpersonal connections. In fact, it could be argued that larger social networks are comprised with a higher number of weak-ties between members. Social media may allow connections to be maintained between individuals but it has facilitated weak-tie relationships between individuals, which in person would not have continued to exist (van Ingen, & Wright, 2016). However, in terms of coping it offers a greater diversity in terms of life experience and knowledge for social support than an individual's offline network (Ellison et al, 2007; van Ingen, & Toepoel, 2016; Wright & Miller, 2010). When individuals feel that their close interpersonal relationships cannot provide them with adequate social support, they are more likely to turn to interpersonal relationships with weak-ties (Granovetter, 1973; 1983). Perhaps cumulative support obtained from numerous weak-ties is believed to make up for the deficiencies of support from face-to-face encounters (van Ingen, & Wright, 2016) and why individuals may use both online and offline resources to cope with stress (Vergeer, & Pelzer, 2009). The ability to gather coping resources such as social support has been linked to reduced negative mental or physiological symptoms and increased well-being (Lett, Blumenthal, Babyak, Catellier, Carney, Berkman, Burg, Mitchell, Jaffe & Schneiderman, 2007) and explains why an individual attempts to seek support from weak-ties rather than investing further energy into obtaining support from individuals whom they have strong-ties.

### **The Outcome of the Vent**

Catharsis theory suggested that venting anger rather than attempting to suppress it is thought to enable emotional releases (Bushman, Baumeister, & Phillips, 2001) and therefore successfully eliminate anger and reduce subsequent aggression (Aloia & Solomon, 2016). However, the empirical evidence to support this proposition is conflicting (Aloia & Solomon, 2016; Bushman, 2002) and the findings of this study demonstrated differential outcomes across the participants. The findings of this research suggested that in some circumstances, venting on Facebook was cathartic for the participants and allowed them to release pressure. Other participants demonstrated that venting did increase anger and encouraged rumination

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

The participant reporting no further negative emotions relating to the circumstance following the vent demonstrated the successful de-escalation of emotions. In this instance, the vent was effective in extinguishing the frustration and dissatisfaction felt by the participant. This enabled these participants to 'move on' and to put the experience behind them. Comparatively, other participants communicated negative emotions following their vent, which indicated that the venting experience was unsuccessful at helping the participant address the symptoms of the work-related stressor.

It was observed that the most common response to the participants' Facebook vents was to agree with the venter, consistent with the literature by Alicke et al. (1992). The types of responses received provided validation and support to the venter. It was interpreted that receiving responses that agreed with the participant allowed them to feel validated, and these responses helped bolster their self-esteem. The act of agreeing with the venter was likely to be interpreted in different ways and therefore had a differential effect across the participants, making predicting an outcome almost impossible. However, the findings have highlighted that whilst the outcomes may not be able to be predicted, for some participants venting was helpful in releasing anger and obtaining social support and for others it was not. Responses of support may enable the venter to feel validated, but it often attempts to address the negative emotions, rather than addressing the source of the stress by encouraging problem solving. Therefore it is important that the response provided to a venter does not encourage further inflammation of negative emotions (Infante, 1995). For some participants, the messages of validation and support re-ignited their negative emotions and allowed them to continue to ruminate about problem. Furthermore, these participants tended to inflate the original issue and allowed further pressure accumulation from other issues they faced at work. However in some instances, the vent was successful at extinguishing negative feelings and participants were able to use the validation and support they obtained to address and de-escalate their negative emotions.

The data provided insights as to the mechanisms that contributed to an inflammation or extinguishing outcome. The initial level of dissatisfaction experienced, as well as the contingent responses they received from their peers influenced the outcomes that were reported by the participants. In essence, the higher the level of initial dissatisfaction, the greater the social resources required to cope. A pattern emerged regarding the accumulation of pressure and the vent's ability to help address the negative emotions. The participants who reported experiencing one-off frustrating circumstances (Cara, Lily and Jack) reported no long-term lingering negative emotions and therefore the circumstance did not contribute to overall job dissatisfaction. The responses they received from their peers acknowledged the frustration the

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

felt, but enabled them to cope with the symptoms they had experienced. In these instances, venting was demonstrated as a constructive way of coping with stress and therefore the individual would have very little reason to continue to vent. Comparatively, the participants that experienced an accumulation of pressure over time indicated that venting was insufficient in helping them address the negative emotions they experienced. This was because the severity of the stress, frustration and dissatisfaction was likely to be higher than for those who experienced a one-off circumstance. Furthermore, whilst the responses they received aimed to provide emotional support it also enabled the participant to engage in ongoing rumination. This contributed to the inflammation of negative feelings, and the social support obtained online was still insufficient in helping the individual address the symptoms of their stressor.

It was observed that the participants vented to individuals that did not directly have the ability to resolve the problem. This supports the notion that venting was used more as an emotion focused coping mechanism, because the vents were not targeted at someone who could enact a solution. Whilst several of the responses provided suggestions for possible solutions, it was interpreted that by the time the participants vented, they had lost confidence that a solution was achievable and instead turned their focus towards addressing their negative emotions. This provides another explanation for why the participants chose to vent away from the work context, because of the belief that the problem could not be solved. However, by doing so, this behaviour was self-reinforcing and made it far less likely that the original stressor would be resolved.

Whilst the responses to vents cannot be predicted, by venting to people they know, the venter may assume the social norms pertaining to responding to negative self-disclosed information would make it less likely that responses received would not intentionally cause further distress. It was noted that there was an absence of flaming responses that blamed the participant, defended the organisation or even encouraged the venter to reflect on their behaviour. This is significant because it highlighted both the superficial and biased nature of the online communication between the venter and their audience within this study. Generally, the messages received in response to the vent received attempted to help the participant feel better, rather than assisting them with problem solving. This prevented the participant in engaging in reflective behaviour that would allow reframing or cognitive coping to occur. Because the comments are not anonymous and can be seen by other members of the social network, responders may be more likely to respond in a way that is aligned to the socially constructed norms of how individuals should act on non-anonymous social media forums. Responders may feel a social obligation to agree with the venter and this type of response can be successful in helping the venter feel validated. Venters may believe that because the responses they are likely

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

to receive from Facebook friends is potentially more predictable and bias, it is likely that this will influence the venters decision of who their audience should be. Therefore, venters may perceive it more beneficial to their self-esteem to vent to people they know than if they were to vent anonymously. However, it could easily be argued that responses received to Facebook vents are particularly dangerous as the venter may assume the responses they receive are intended to provide them with social support to help them cope. Irrespective of the relationship between the venter and the respondents, and the responder's underlying intentions or motivations when responding, it highlights both the unpredictable nature of the responses and the differing ways they can be interpreted, allowing for differential outcomes to be experienced by the venter. Therefore, those who are responding to online vents should be aware of the effect their response has on the outcome for the venter. Responders may believe they are providing appropriate social support to individuals who vent, by sending messages of support and validation. However, this can allow the individual to engage in co-rumination with the responders and lead to a re-inflammation of negative emotions. Responders would be better not responding on the public forum and to instead respond in a way that helps the venter address their negative emotions and promote them to engage in problem solving or reframing. Providing responses that use emotion focused and cognitive focused coping strategies simultaneously will allow the venter to address their negative emotions in the short term, and at the same time help to devise a strategy to address the original stressor. In theory, this is likely to be more constructive towards helping them cope than using one strategy alone.

The use of social media to vent one's frustrations with an employer had a differential effect on people's desire to stay with their employers. While some found it cathartic, others felt it was the final straw. As such, it is impossible to determine whether online venting will be beneficial to employees as it has been demonstrated as a far more complex phenomenon than first thought. Tables 2, 3 and 4 depict the responses pertaining to job status and turnover intentions reported by the participants. The participants who experienced turnover intentions (Lucy, Charlotte, Alice, Lina and Lucas) appeared to have little confidence that the work-related problems would be addressed, and therefore would experience ongoing job-related frustration if they remained in their roles. One of the participants, Lina, communicated that she tolerated the mounting stressors for several months, but eventually was not able to continue, and left her role without another role to go to. Similarly, Alice actively sought new employment prior to reaching the breaking point depicted by Lina's abrupt exit from her role. These examples demonstrate the participants reaching a threshold where they could no longer cope with the stressors at work, even while utilizing both online and offline coping resources. What may be interpreted is that the stressors experienced by the participant continued to outweigh the

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

coping mechanisms employed by the individual for an extended period of time until the participant reached breaking point and resigned. It is likely that over this period, the participant weighed up the costs and benefits of remaining in the role. Two of the participants (Lucy and Charlotte) cited turnover intentions but remained in their current roles whilst seeking other employment opportunities. Both of these participants reported putting in less effort into their roles following their venting experience, possibly demonstrating disengagement from their jobs.

Experiencing continued stress was detrimental for participants. This included the group who experienced ongoing work-related problems for some time, prior to venting and for the participants who were unable to diffuse negative emotions, experienced turnover intentions but found they were unable to leave. This was because experiencing ongoing stress appeared to erode the participants' resilience, and they began to require additional social resources to help them cope. This was demonstrated by the participants who cited multiple instances of venting on Facebook, despite previous instances of venting unsuccessfully diffusing their negative emotions. Experiencing negative emotions following the vent, may have contributed to both self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing behaviour. The more dissatisfied the participant felt, the more they felt the need to address the negative emotions and obtaining responses that encouraged rumination allowed the participant to experience further dissatisfaction. The vent and the subsequent negative emotions experienced may have had a substantiating effect on their existing desire to leave and therefore encouraged further self-fulfilling behaviours.

Turnover intentions were not unanimously observed across the participants. Therefore, not all instances of Facebook venting signify an employees' overarching dissatisfaction towards their jobs that may contribute towards a desire to leave. Of the participants who were no longer in the same role, they reported remaining in their roles following the vent and cited other reasons for leaving such as; completing study and looking for work closer aligned to their professional qualifications or partnership decisions to relocate to a different city. Of the research participants whose post did not contribute to a desire to exit (Lily, Hamish, Cara, Jack and Michael), the responses suggested that venting was effective in partially or completely extinguishing negative feelings. This may be considered a positive outcome, as the vent may have contributed towards minimising long term undesirable consequences relating to this particular situation such as disengagement, deviant behaviours or absenteeism. However it was hard to speculate, as these outcomes were not measured within the current study.

Turnover intentions are generally depicted as negative outcomes for organisations due to the implicit and explicit costs associated with replacing staff, and several of the participants of this research acted upon their desire to leave their roles. However, the findings of this research highlighted that a number of participants who had become increasingly dissatisfied at

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

work had a desire to leave but found themselves unable to leave. Whilst this group of participants was small, it was significant and exemplified the negative implications of rumination following a venting occurrence. For the most part, the participants of this research demonstrated how venting served as a way to cope, and by using Facebook they were able to maintain interpersonal relationships online as well as attempting to accumulate social resources that would allow them to cope. However, the participants that experienced mounting work-related dissatisfaction and an inability to leave highlight the negative implications for employers when employees are unhappy and disengaged but remain employed. This may be one of the negative and unpredicted consequences of venting on Facebook as the overall venting process can substantiate the dissatisfaction for these individuals, and may encourage deviant work-place behaviours or contribute to a negative workplace culture. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of preventing these types of negative organisational outcomes by attempting to address issues early on and preventing problem escalation.

The findings of this research suggest that the primary goal for venting on social media was not to intentionally or deliberately disparage the image of the participant's employer. The responses revealed other motivations and objectives to venting. Therefore, the traditional view that negative employee voice outside of work is a 'threat' to organisations may be overstated. However, venting about work has been further complicated by the presence of social media platforms such as Facebook due to the public nature of work-related vents. It is clear that public negativity about an organisation has the ability to be detrimental to its image and therefore it is expected that firms will look to stifle these types of behaviours. Typically, the social media policies employed by organisations have a negative orientation, and aim to restrict certain employee behaviours (Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; KPMG, 2012). Unfortunately, this does not eliminate the desire to vent about work-related circumstances on social media. The benefits to organisations arising from employee voice can include enhanced productivity, innovation, employee engagement and reduced turnover (Donovan et al., 2016). Therefore, organisations that currently forbid forms of social media venting should consider policies or practices that encourage other forms of communication from employees to avoid the tensions that have been shown leading to online venting. Furthermore, acknowledging the unpredictability of what can lead an employee to feel dissatisfied; this research has highlighted the need for these types of practices that allow work-related frustrations to be addressed appropriately and earlier.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The following conceptual framework has been derived from the participants' responses. Across the participants there were 3 distinct behaviours observed prior to the vent, which demonstrated the different ways the vent was arrived. These are outlined below:

#### **Reaction Venting**

The first observed behaviour has been categorised as 'Reaction Venting' whereby the participants perceived a problem influenced by their subjective values and opinions, allowing their dissatisfaction threshold to be reached. These participants perceived that the problem could be resolved and therefore made legitimate attempts to solve the problem by attempting to raise their concerns with their respective managers. Unfortunately, through failed attempts to reach a resolution, the participants' mounting dissatisfaction and frustration led them to vent on Facebook. The frustration experienced by the participants appeared cumulative from both the initially identified problem, as well as the additional frustration from the failed attempts to reach a desirable outcome. The participants' attempts to change the status quo were represented by their initial attempts to solve the problem, demonstrating a cognitive coping strategy. The venting occurred as a reaction to the subsequent failed attempts to solve the problem, signalling a switch to an emotion-focused coping strategy

#### **Action Venting**

The second observed behaviour was identified as 'Action Venting'. Similar to the behaviours observed within Reaction Venting, a problem was identified by the participants. However, these participants did not perceive that the problem was one that could be resolved for various reasons, arrived through sense making activities and considering past experiences of similar issues. These participants communicated rationalisations for why they didn't make attempts to resolve the issues, such as the belief that their manager did not have the power or authority to enable a solution, a general uncontrollable circumstance that caused personal frustration to the individual, a situation that could not be resolved retrospectively, or the perception that their issue may not be an issue perceived as important to others. The participants' action, and attempts to change the status quo, was represented by their vent. However, instead of making attempts to solve the problem these participants desired to attain a personal resolution by attempting to address the negative emotions. This demonstrated an emotion-focused coping strategy.

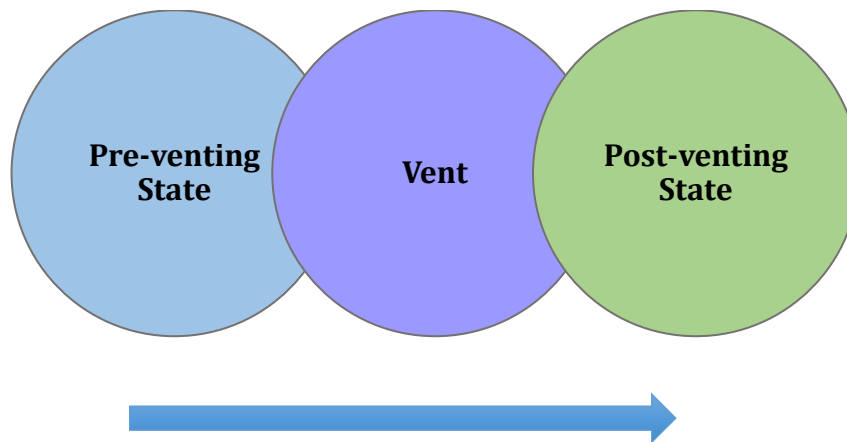
### **Frustration from Inaction**

The third observed behaviour observed prior to the vent can be categorised as ‘Frustration from Inaction’ where the participants identified an issue, and believed that a solution could be reached. However, due to observing failed attempts by other colleagues, these participants did not actively attempt to solve the problem. Similarly observed within Action Venting, these participants did not attempt to seek a solution and instead turned their energy towards addressing the negative emotions they experienced.

### **Proposed Framework**

Each participant communicated the circumstances leading up to and following their vent. Therefore it has been interpreted that the phenomenon comprised of 3 phases: the participant’s pre-venting state, the venting occurrence and the post-venting state. This depicts the end-to-end process experienced by the participants.

***Figure 1: Phases of Venting***



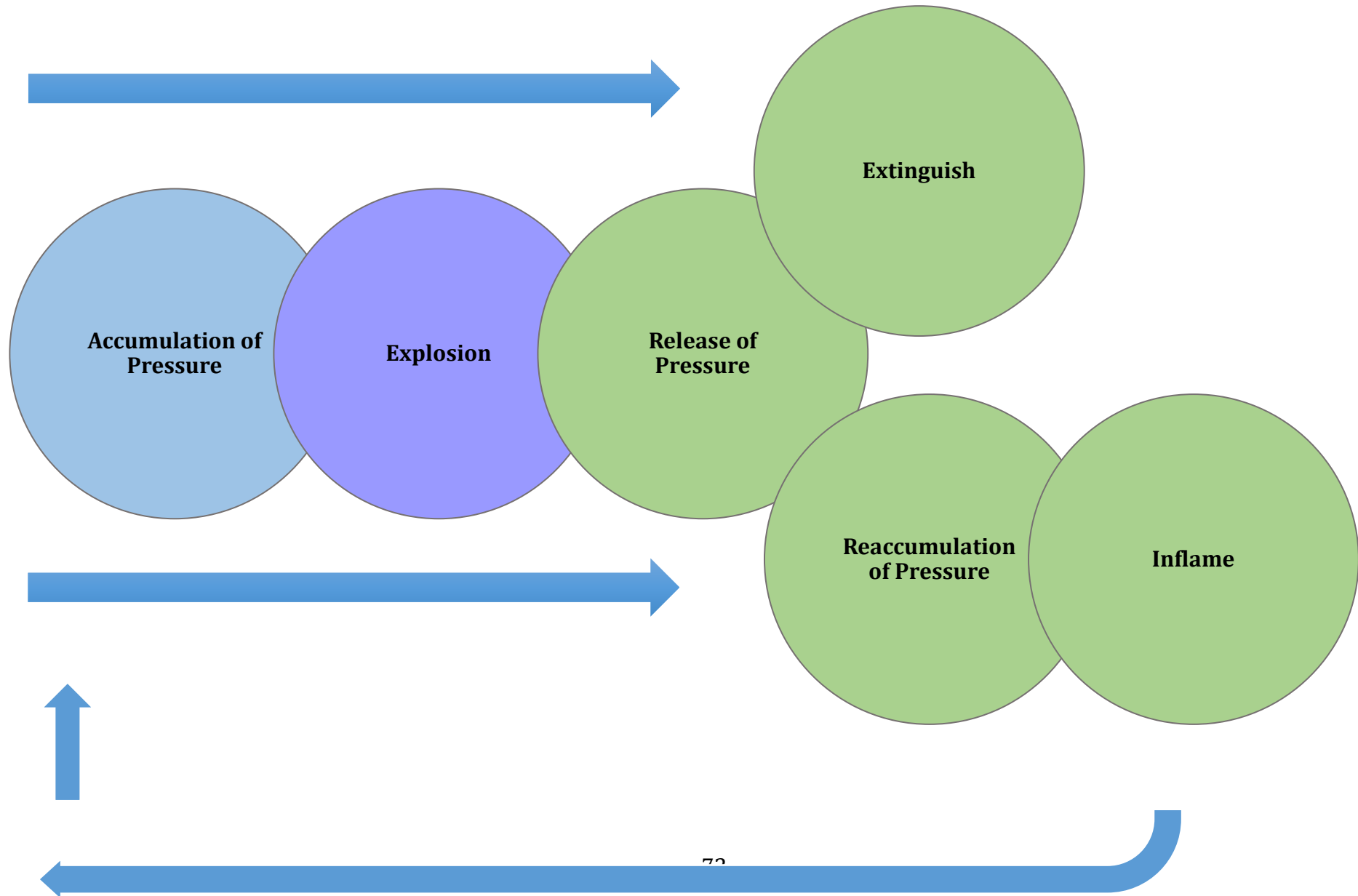
The pre-venting state was represented by an ‘accumulation of pressure’, demonstrated by dissatisfaction and frustration over time which eroded individuals’ resilience and ability to cope with the stressors on their own. This depletion of their personal resources was one factor that motivated these individuals to vent to others. The pre-venting phase included the identification of a problem, the sense making activities they undertook when deciding whether or not a solution could be reached, and whether or not the participant would pursue a solution. The occurrence of the vent signalled the tipping point, whereby the participants had reached their threshold to vent and acted upon the desire to vent. The term ‘explosion’ was selected to signify the act of venting and the point where the participant released their thoughts and emotions and



## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

shared them with their Facebook friends. The post-venting state represented differential outcomes for the participants, contingent on both the pre-venting state and the circumstances that occurred at the time of the vent. There were two observed outcomes experienced by the participants. The first outcome indicated that pressure had been successfully released and the negative emotions had been extinguished, depicting a linear process. The second outcome indicated that the vent allowed them to temporarily release pressure but allowed re-accumulation of pressure depicting a cyclical process. Figure 1 diagrammatically depicts the 3 overall phases of venting, observed from the participants responses and Figure 2 demonstrates the process of the accumulation of pressure, through to the outcomes of the vent on Facebook.

*Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Framework*



### **Theoretical Implications**

The purpose of this research was not to determine the effectiveness of venting on Facebook as a coping mechanism for stress, but rather to understand what has motivated individuals to do so, and the objectives they aim to achieve by venting to an audience. Indeed, previous literature has stated that venting is one of many possible strategies to address stress. However, current literature provided little explanation of venting within a work context and the influence of social media on this particular phenomenon. The findings and discussion have been crucial in highlighting the theoretical implications of this research. Furthermore, these findings have provided an explanation of how and why the phenomenon of work-related venting occurs on social media platforms such as Facebook and as such has contributed to advancement in our understanding of this topic.

The findings and discussion portray that the phenomenon of work-related venting on social media is far more complex than simply an impulsive manifestation of an individual's stress or frustration. Prior to this research, venting instances about work may have been assumed to be nothing more than an impetuous act of employee deviance or a calculated attempt to sabotage an employer's reputation. Whilst some participants communicated their haste to purge themselves of negative feelings, a clear process of decision making was undertaken preceding the venting occurrence. Furthermore, the participants' responses revealed alternative motivations for venting, other than expressing frustration or communicating the stress they had experienced. Within this study, the concepts of venting and social interaction were intertwined, which was demonstrated by the participants' need to share with an audience and obtain responses.

This research extends our present understanding of the phenomenon by highlighting a number of interconnected mechanisms, thus revealing the complexity of the phenomenon. For these participants, venting about work on Facebook was a response to feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation within their organisations. Indeed, an employee's perception of control or autonomy in their workplace influences whether and how an employee exercises voice through social media (Martin, Parry & Flowers, 2015). The individual participants felt their concerns were treated as insignificant and that their organisations provided insufficient in-organisation processes or procedures that enabled these individuals to address this. This was depicted through expressions of helplessness and the inability to resolve or cope within the organisation. Venting served as both a way for these individuals to address these feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation by communicating outside of the work context, and to a self-constructed community of individuals to obtain social resources. Furthermore, the social interaction obtained through Facebook was perceived as necessary by

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

the participants to obtain desired social support that would enable them to attempt to overcome these feelings of marginalisation and workplace voice minimisation. This was because Facebook provided an alternative platform that would allow these individuals to attempt to attain these objectives. This research has highlighted the importance that individuals have placed on social interactions and obtaining desired social support, to enable them to cope with stress. Therefore, it extends our understanding of the concept of online social resource accumulation and specifically in a work context. Consistent with previous research by van Ingen, & Wright (2016) and Granovetter (1973; 1983) the findings of the present study also suggest that individuals will attempt to accumulate online resources if they feel they have gained insufficient support from their offline networks. Furthermore, a study by Cole, Nick, Zelkowitz, Roeder & Spinelli (2017) believed that support obtained via social media was relatively redundant for people with high levels of offline social support. This in turn has two implications. Firstly, if adequate coping resources can be obtained offline, the individual in theory will have a reduced motivation to attempt to obtain coping resources online. This links to feelings of voice minimisation and the lack of coping support structures available within organisations. Secondly, if support obtained via social media deemed redundant for people with high levels of offline social support, if this is conceptualised alongside the need to share and communicate, it provides an explanation of why Facebook venting will take place even if the individual is not seeking to acquire additional coping resources. Therefore, using Facebook to vent can be deemed an extension of traditional workplace coping strategies. It can be used both a way to make up for the perceived deficit of support obtained offline but also as a form of social communication. Rather than conceptualising these motivations as on either ends of a continuum, it appears in fact that these are co-existing motivators with each individual placing a slightly greater emphasis on one or the other, depending on their initial levels of dissatisfaction and desire to share with others.

The literature has discussed the more recent use of forms of social media as a platform for employee voice (Kennedy, 2013; Klaas, Olson-Buchanan & Ward, 2012; Gossett & Kilker, 2006; Martin et al., 2013; Holland, Cooper & Hecker, 2016; McGoldrick, 2013; Miles & Muuka, 2011; Schoneboom, 2011; Richards, 2008; Richards & Kosmala, 2013). The benefits of employee voice have been explored within management literature and furthermore, the negative consequences that organisations may face if they attempt to silence employee voice. This research provides linkages to existing literature on employee voice by highlighting possible antecedents such as employee marginalisation and the alternative utilization of social media as a platform for employee voice. Lastly, this research highlights how the concepts of employee voice, employee coping and work-related social media venting are interrelated.

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Across the participants of this study, turnover intentions were not reported consistently. Turnover intentions are usually regarded as a negative outcome for organisations for many reasons often related to the implicit and explicit costs associated with replacing staff. However the findings of this research argue that organisations are also at risk when employees have turnover intentions but are unable to leave. Whilst this group of participants was small, it was significant because it exemplified the negative implications of rumination following a venting occurrence. Therefore, the practical contributions of this research should address the individuals' feelings of marginalisation as well as devise strategies that satisfy the individuals' need to feel heard in order to prevent counter-productive employee behaviours of those who remain employed.

### **Practical Contributions**

The findings of this research has suggested that employee venting on social media is a response to feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation within their organisations, and that venting on Facebook is used to socially interact with others to obtain additional social resources to cope with work-related stressors. The practical contributions that will be outlined within this section will aim to address the two main theoretical implications above: addressing feelings of marginalisation and to overcome the perception of voice minimisation. Therefore, both proactive and reactive strategies will be suggested.

### **Social Media Policies**

Social media policies aim to mitigate risks posed to an organisation's image by attempting to regulate content posted by employees. However, by restricting the content that employees are able to post, these policies overlook the significance of how social media can be used to obtain social support. Effective management of employee voice begins with understanding its purpose (Miles & Mangold, 2014). While superficially venting can be interpreted as a depiction of dissatisfaction, the findings of this study suggest that online venting is a far more complex phenomenon. Simply enforcing aggressive and restrictive social media policies is unlikely to curb online venting behaviour. Therefore organisations should consider allowing open communication as a way of mitigating harmful online venting. This includes implementing in-organisation strategies that encourage work-related venting whilst at work, as well as revising social media policies to allow venting online with the provision that no company information is identifiable. Furthermore, employees should be encouraged to utilize the work-place venting processes in the first instance, rather than going directly to the online channels. As a wider

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

initiative, employees should be encouraged to share positive work-related content and organisations should attempt to remove the negative stigma associated with voice minimisation and restrictive social media policies by allowing information to be shared online which can enhance an organisations image. While much of the focus of social media-employment related literature has focused on the negative impact of social media, less attention has been given to finding constructive ways to enhance organisational outcomes (Holland, Cooper & Hecker, 2016). This research therefore begins to delve into this gap in literature, encouraging practitioners to perceive work-related venting on Facebook as an opportunity to identify and address and pre-existing organisational weaknesses identified from Facebook venting content.

### **Proactively Addressing Feelings of Marginalisation**

It was consistently communicated that irrespective of whether the work-related problem could be rectified, the participants felt that their concerns were treated as insignificant. Furthermore, the participants reported that their managers simply acknowledging the raised work related problems was insufficient in curbing these feelings. Whilst it may not be possible to prevent instances that lead to an individual feeling marginalised, it does present a very crucial and early opportunity to prevent further escalation. Therefore, this research has highlighted the importance addressing employee concerns to prevent employees' feelings of marginalisation. In the first instance, it is important to appropriately acknowledge the concerns raised by the employee and respond with empathy, respect and consideration. Furthermore, the response should include detailed explanations to employees as to why certain resolutions may not be possible. Whilst this strategy may not completely negate the frustration the employee feels, this aims to allow employees to feel that their concerns are taken seriously and they obtain an understanding of the challenges that may prevent the original stressor or problem being addressed or eliminated. Essentially, this interaction provides the opportunity to foster open communication and as a strategy to manage employee expectations.

### **Proactively Addressing Feelings of Voice Minimisation**

This study highlighted the lack of in-organisation procedures or a culture that supports or allows employees to vent frustrations at work. This in turn meant that insufficient social support could be obtained while at work. Therefore, these employees attempted to exert voice outside of work to obtain additional social support. For many organisations, it is preferable that organisational dissatisfaction is not communicated to external audiences (Miles & Mangold, 2014). Consequently irrespective of whether a solution is able to be reached, organisations

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

should consider creating in-organisation venting channels and promoting employees use of such channels which should be supported by a culture that removes the fear of being reprimanded. This would allow employees the opportunity to address work-related stressors at work and within a community of their colleagues. Furthermore, it will enable collective workplace coping strategies and foster an environment where colleagues help and support each other. For this to be successful to encourage employees to confine their dissatisfaction communication to within the organisation, these processes should provide timely feedback from management or peers, and be readily available and easy to use (Miles & Mangold, 2014). Examples of ways that venting can be encouraged can include routine one-on-one meetings between managers and employees, including a debriefing segment as part of a team meeting, or having a ‘grumble jar’ where employees are able to communicate frustrations about work. This will allow employees to vent in ways that they identify as meaningful and appropriate to the context. This also provides managers with opportunities to acknowledge and address the concerns of employees and make attempts diffuse negative emotions. Lastly, employees should receive acknowledgement for changes that are made deriving from the input, which will in turn enhance their engagement with this process and therefore increase the likelihood of utilizing these processes in the future (Miles & Mangold, 2014). If in-organisation processes are successful in allowing the employee to overcome feelings of voice minimisation, in theory it should subsequently reduce the impetus to vent outside of work. This is because it is thought that individuals will use a combination of online and offline networks to cope with stress (Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009), and that using online networks to cope with stress is thought to allow the accumulation of additional social resources to enable them to cope (Lett et al., 2007) to make up for a perceived shortfall of social resources obtained through offline networks (van Ingen & Wright, 2016). Therefore, it is hypothesized that if adequate in-organisation strategies promote collegial support structures and employees are able to obtain adequate support at work, it will reduce the need for employees to turn to online communities to obtain social support.

There was a general perception across the participants that venting was an effective coping mechanism for stress and frustration. Therefore, it may be appropriate for organisations to provide training or education to employees regarding the employee venting, potentially as part of a larger initiative directed towards addressing ways to manage work-related stress. This programme should be directed towards educating employees on the dangers of online venting, discussing alternatives to online venting, communicating the differences between emotion and cognitive venting, and lastly communicating the influence of responders to their vents, and selecting an appropriate audience to vent to. Positive psychology principles may also be

## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

included to negate the effects of internal rumination or negative emotion contagion when venting to others. Consequently, employees will have a better understanding of the potential negative outcomes of rumination and emotion-focused venting, in comparison to the potential benefits of constructive, cognitive focused venting as discussed in previous literature. Employee assistance programmes such as confidential counselling may also be provided to employees. In the cases of breaches of employment or health and safety legislation, employees should be encouraged to use third party advocacy if there continue to be failed attempts to resolve issues through the established organisational channels.

### **Reacting to Instances of Online Venting**

This research has provided key insights to the phenomenon of work-related venting on social media and has subsequently encouraged instances of online venting to be perceived in a different way. Whilst this research only examined the participants' perceptions of this interaction, it revealed several implications to address. The participants perceived that the response they received from their managers when they were instructed to remove their post only addressed their online vent and did not address or respond to the original issue it was referring to. This interaction was reported by the participants to further contribute towards feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation. Therefore, this highlights the need for an alternative approach when responding to instances of online venting as a manager. As discussed previously, this presents a reactive opportunity to respond to employees' concerns with empathy, respect and consideration and addressing the central issue, not just the symptom of their distress. As expressed in Gossett & Kilker (2006), employees require a safe space to share ideas and voice opinions and concerns, and if this space is not available within an organisation, employees will seek to fulfil these needs and objectives elsewhere. Rather than perceiving negative employee voice as a threat that needs to be silenced, this signifies an opportunity to identify and address existing communication infrastructure weaknesses (Gossett & Kilker, 2006). Therefore, instances of online venting should not be ignored or dismissed and conversely, organisations should be examining the content of work related vents more closely to understand the underlying issues.

From the perspective of those who have the ability to respond to vents; either in person or online, individuals who respond to vents should consider the effect that their response may have on the venting individual. Whilst it requires less energy to provide a response that will help boost the venter's self-esteem, it will be more beneficial to the venting individual to encourage them to employ emotion focused and cognitive coping strategies simultaneously. Responses that are influenced by social norms and simply agree with the venter have the



## Chapter 6 – DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

potential to cause further inflammation if the responses enable the venter to feel validated. However by assisting the venter to address their emotions while encouraging them to problem solve, will be far more beneficial for the individual experiencing work related stressors.

In terms of the social media platforms themselves, they provide what may be perceived as a safe space for individuals to share information, interact and express opinions. However, when the workplace communication infrastructure does not support these objectives, individuals can turn to social media to fulfil these needs. Accepting that there are likely to be outliers that will continue to vent online, especially as this research has demonstrated alternative objectives to venting on Facebook other than to express their dissatisfaction, it may be that social medial platforms look to implement certain features to help protect this perceived safe space. This is not to suggest that Facebook should be actively encouraging instances of online venting. Facebook already allows the ability to target a specific audience within a user's Facebook friends that are able to see certain status updates and perhaps these types of functional features could be made more obvious to users wanting to vent. Alternatively, there could be a time-delayed function so that individuals are able to write posts impulsively, but preventing them being visible straight away, giving the poster the opportunity to remove the post going if they change their mind. Lastly, much like Snapchat, Facebook could implement a self-deleting function where posts disappear after a pre-determined time period. This would not prevent it being disseminated but would certainly remove some of the risks involved with posting online.

The following final chapter of this thesis contains the concluding remarks

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

### Introduction

This chapter will present the concluding remarks that will outline how the findings and subsequent discussion provide answers the original research questions. This chapter will outline the limitations of the present research, followed by suggestions for future research and conclude with the summary of the research purpose.

### Concluding Remarks

The findings of this research have provided explanations for what motivated individuals to vent and why these participants selected Facebook. Therefore these two research questions will be answered together as the findings suggest that they are inextricably linked

### **RQ1: What motivated employees to vent about work, and RQ2: why was Facebook selected as the platform to vent?**

The responses indicated that dissatisfaction and frustration derived from the identification of a work-related problem was an antecedent to the occurrence of the vent. However, this alone was insufficient in explaining the phenomenon of work-related venting on Facebook. The decision to vent online and specifically on Facebook appears deliberate and influenced by the desire to speak away from the work context, but not necessarily away from work colleagues. The vent represented several underlying messages. It provided insights into the values, attitudes and expectations of the individual. The vent was essentially a depiction of something intrinsically important to the participant. It represented their frustration or dissatisfaction from a misalignment of their expectations and the circumstances they experienced. Furthermore, it communicated a perception that the problem posed a threat to their interests or wellbeing.

The findings suggest that motivation to vent on Facebook is comprised by several factors including:

- The desire to express frustration or dissatisfaction;
- The need to address the negative symptoms of work-related stressor and the belief that venting was an effective way to achieve this;
- A perceived deficit of social support obtained through offline work and non-work networks;
- The desire to maintain online interpersonal connections by disclosing information about oneself;

## Chapter 7 – CONCLUSION

- Using venting and disclosure of information as a form of social communication to seek responses from Facebook friends. These responses would allow the participant to accumulate additional social resources;
- The belief that accumulating social resources would allow the participant to cope with their work-related stressor.

Within this study, venting about work on Facebook was demonstrated as an emotion-focused coping mechanism for work-related stressors, arrived through an inability to solve the work-related problem. Venting on Facebook served as a way for the venter to express their dissatisfaction or frustration, satisfy a need to be heard and as a way purge negative emotions relating to a work-related stressor. By venting, the participants hoped that it would help alleviate the negative emotions. The mounting frustration and dissatisfaction the participant experienced eroded their motivation to resolve the problems they faced. By the time the participants vented, the primary motivation for venting was not to enable a solution to the original problem and the participant had instead turned their energy towards addressing the negative symptoms of the stressor.

Facebook has been cited as a popular social networking tool for Gen-Y, making it one of several possible options when deciding to vent online. Within this research, venting on Facebook allowed the venter to achieve alternative objectives such as obtaining social support and maintaining interpersonal connections, providing an explanation of why venting occurred even when the participant did not experience a high level or prolonged dissatisfaction, frustration or stress. Facebook is a social media platform that allows and encourages communication and interactions between users and was selected by participants as it enabled them to access a self-regulated audience of known individuals. It was supported by participant responses that using Facebook to communicate and maintain interpersonal connections with others is considered a normal part of everyday life.

Venting was used as a form of social communication. Participants shared their circumstances with their online social network to maintain interpersonal connections and to encourage and obtain responses such as empathy, support or validation that would allow them to feel empowered. These responses acted as a way to accumulate additional social resources that would allow them to cope with their work-related stressor. Therefore the findings of this research suggest that the participants used Facebook to vent as a strategy to seek and obtain support. Facebook self-disclosure is positively related to enacted social support obtained via Facebook (Zhang, 2017). The maintenance of online interpersonal relationships is self-

## Chapter 7 – CONCLUSION

reinforcing and individuals will continue to seek social resources from those they know, to help foster relationships for future support seeking behaviour.

From the data, several themes emerged which provided an explanation of why Facebook was selected over other online alternatives. Using Facebook to vent also helped participants overcome space or time barriers associated with face-to-face venting. Facebook's popularity and high membership along with its functional features enabled venters to communicate with a larger number of individuals simultaneously. This enabled using Facebook to be perceived as a convenient way for individuals to access members of their network to seek and obtain higher levels of social support. Therefore, despite mixed responses from participants that the vent enabled them to feel better or regulate their mood or reduce their anger, participants cited that using Facebook was an effective way to communicate and share their circumstances with others. This provides an explanation of why individuals vent on Facebook about work, even if they are not highly dissatisfied.

### **RQ3: What were the consequences of venting on Facebook?**

There were two main observed outcomes, resulting from venting on Facebook. For some participants the vent acted as a way for individuals to release negative emotions and pressure build-up. For others, the vent was unsuccessful in reducing anger or extinguishing negative emotions, and enabled further pressure accumulation. The personal consequences experienced by the participants, understandably varied due to several factors. This included the level of dissatisfaction or frustration experienced by the participant as well as the responses they received from their peers. Those that experienced lower levels of frustrations or dissatisfaction or only experience it for a short period of time (such as a one off event) appeared to be able to obtain the necessary social support they required to cope. The individuals that reported higher levels of frustration or dissatisfaction (such as experiencing cumulative stressors over time) required additional social resources. In some instances, venting on Facebook was insufficient in helping alleviate the participant's negative emotions. Venting to another person is a dyadic interaction and therein introduces an uncontrollable and indeterminate influence on the outcome of the vent. Responses are contingent on the responder's personal attributes and furthermore with the absence of verbal cues such a tone of voice, textual responses may be interpreted in ways other than intended, by the venter. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the outcomes of venting on Facebook as its effectiveness is highly subjective and dependent on a large number of influences. This makes it difficult to determine whether venting is beneficial for any given individual. What can be said, is that the negative effects of rumination and inflammation of negative emotions is problematic for employees and organisations and

## Chapter 7 – CONCLUSION

therefore any process or policies that will aim to reduce or address work-related stressors will be constructive. Here, positive outcomes of venting included reaching a personal outcome which allowed the participant to de-escalate or eliminate negative emotions relating to the circumstances.

### **Limitations**

Whilst the researcher has made conscious attempts to reduce researcher bias, it must be recognised that conducting research free from bias and preconceptions cannot be guaranteed. Researcher reflection was effective in drawing awareness to the potential issues that could arise throughout the research process and allowed opportunities to address any impending issues.

In comparison to quantitative research, qualitative research integrates the researcher as being a part of the research, rather than removed from it. This is consistent with other phenomenological methodology literature which posits that phenomenological researchers cannot be detached from their existing beliefs, assumptions (Hammersley, 2000) and therefore these ideas cannot be precluded from influencing the how the research is conducted and the conclusions drawn from the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Bracketing exercises aim to draw an awareness of the researcher's preconceptions regarding the research topic. Lastly, to help readers to understand how the interpretations and conclusions were reached, it was necessary to communicate the researcher's personal ontological, epistemological and axiological position. The findings derived from thematic analysis are arrived by the interpretations made by the researcher and therefore this is also noted as a limitation to this study.

The findings of phenomenological research are naturally derived from willing participants, and dependant on the quality of the responses. This is reliant on the participants providing as much detail as possible, and the researcher plays a crucial role in fostering rapport and encouraging participants to elicit open and detailed responses without influencing the answers they provide. The researcher acknowledges the potential hesitation to share experience, particularly those that may be considered controversial or traumatic, which may have prevented potential participants from opting into the research. This was addressed by communicating the aims and purpose of the research as well as ensuring anonymity of the research participants.

Additionally, whilst the recruitment methods employed for this research were deemed appropriate for accessing potential participants meeting the participation criteria, the method of recruitment may have favoured those who have undertaken tertiary education due to the placement of recruitment advertisements and the nature of referrals to potential participants. This has been acknowledged as a limitation of this research.

### **Areas for Future Research**

Several recommendations will be made for future research. Existing social media-employment related research examines the implications of social media on the employment context, with the employee centred research pertaining mainly to employee blogging such as studies by Richards (2008), Richards & Kosmala (2013) and Schoneboom (2011). Future research may be conducted to examine presentations of employee voice on other social media platforms.

This study did not look to ascertain personality type or Facebook usage patterns and propensity to vent on social media. Future quantitative studies may wish to explore this correlation.

Within this study, none of the participants explicitly reported experiencing greater friendship quality with peers following their venting interaction. Future research should examine the impact of work-related venting on the social relationships with peers and colleagues, following a venting occurrence.

The responses from the research suggested that venting on Facebook might become less common. The rising scrutiny of employees' private social networking profiles and of out-of-work social media behaviour may encourage individuals to seek alternative types of social media to communicate content pertaining to negative work-related circumstances. Therefore venting on Facebook may become obsolete, but replaced with other forms of social media venting. Applications such as Snapchat, which self-deletes content after a short period of time, may be worth examining in the future. However, this may also have content validation issues.

Future studies could look at cross cultural differences regarding venting on social media by examining cultures that differ in values pertaining to individualism and collectivism in relation to coping, as suggested in Nadkarni & Hofmann (2012). In particular, if there is cross-cultural differences in the use of social media to access social support.

The findings of this present research indicated that venters deliberately vented away from the work context, but not necessarily away from colleagues. Therefore future research should be conducted to who vents are directed at (such as colleagues compared with family or friends) and the types of responses they elicit (emotion focused or cognitive focused)

Finally, the contemporary nature of social media research in the employment context is still in its infancy. Therefore very little quantitative studies have been conducted to test theoretical hypothesis derived from qualitative research.

### **Summary of the Research Purpose**

This current research set out to examine instances of venting by Generation-Y individuals on Facebook. The study sought to understand the motivations, antecedents and consequences experienced by these individuals to obtain a better understanding of how and why this phenomenon occurs. The research also aimed to understand why individuals might select Facebook to vent. The original research questions are noted below:

RQ1: What motivated employees to vent about work?

RQ2: Why was Facebook selected as the platform to vent?

RQ3: What were the consequences of venting on Facebook?

Undertaking semi-structured interviews and the reviewing the content of the respective Facebook posts provided the necessary data for this research. The inductive process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) allowed emergent themes from the participants transcribed response data to be identified. This in turn was used to describe and explain the meaning and structures of the phenomenon.

The purpose of this research was not to determine the effectiveness of venting on Facebook as a coping mechanism for stress, but rather to understand what has motivated individuals to do so, and the objectives they aim to achieve by venting to an audience. The findings of this research suggest that the major antecedent to the phenomenon of venting about work on Facebook is the identification of a work-related problem and experiencing dissatisfaction, frustration or stress. However, this alone was insufficient in explaining the occurrence of the phenomenon. The findings and discussion portray that the phenomenon of work-related venting on social media is far more complex than simply an impulsive depiction of an individual's stress or frustration. Within this study, the concepts of venting and social interaction were intertwined, which was demonstrated by the participants' need to share with an audience and obtain responses. This research extends our present understanding of the phenomenon, by highlighting a number of interconnected mechanisms, thus revealing the complexity of the phenomenon. For these participants, venting about work on Facebook was a response to feelings of marginalisation and voice minimisation within their organisations.

The findings of this research have been able to effectively answer the proposed research questions, as well as highlight implications for practice and suggest strategies to address these issues.

## REFERENCES

### References

- Action Research & Action Learning for community and organisational change. (2012). *Convergent interviewing essentials*. Retrieved from <http://www.aral.com.au/resources/coin.pdf>
- Ahuja, A. K., Biesaga, K., Sudak, D. M., Draper, J., & Womble, A. (2014). Suicide on Facebook. *Journal of Psychiatric Practice*, 20(2), 141-146. DOI: 10.1097/01.pra.0000445249.38801.d1
- Alicke, M. D., Braun, J. C., Glor, J. E., Klotz, M. L., Magee, J., Sederhoim, H., & Siegel, R. (1992). Complaining behavior in social interaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(3), 286-295. DOI: 10.1177/0146167292183004
- Ally, S. E. S., Blewett, C., & van Niekerk, B. (2014, August). *Facebook: The risk-taking attitude amongst Emerging Adults*. Paper presented at the 2014 Conference for Information Security for South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa. Retrieved from <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/6950515/>
- Aloia, L. S., & Solomon, D. H. (2016). Emotions associated with verbal aggression expression and suppression. *Western Journal of Communication*, 80(1), 3-20. DOI: 10.1080/10570314.2014.943428
- Asuzu, C. C., & Elumelu, T. N. (2013). Assessing cancer patients' quality of life and coping mechanisms in Radiotherapy Department of the University College Hospital, Ibadan. *Psycho-Oncology Journal of the Psychological, Social and Behavioural Dimensions of Cancer*, 22(10), 2306-2312. DOI: 10.1002/pon.3290
- Barclay, L. J., & Skarlicki, D. P. (2009). Healing the wounds of organizational injustice: Examining the benefits of expressive writing. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(2), 511- 523. DOI: 10.1037/a0013451
- Bazarova, N. N. (2012). Public intimacy: Disclosure interpretation and social judgments on Facebook. *Journal of Communication*, 62(5), 815-832. DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01664.x
- Beedie, C., Terry, P., & Lane, A. (2005). Distinctions between emotion and mood. *Cognition & Emotion*, 19(6), 847-878. DOI: 10.1080/02699930541000057



## REFERENCES

- Berger, P. L., Luckmann, T., & Zifonun, D. (1966). *The social construction of reality* (1st ed.). Garden City, N. Y. :Doubleday.
- Berkeley Graduate Division GSI Teaching and Resource Centre. (2017). *Social Constructivism*. Retrieved from <http://gsi.berkeley.edu/gsi-guide-contents/learning-theory-research/social-constructivism/>
- Berkowitz, L., Green, J.A. and Macaulay, J.R. (1962). Hostility catharsis as the reduction of emotional tension. *Psychiatry*, 25(1), 23-31. DOI: 10.1080/00332747.1962.11023294
- Bevan, M. T. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(1), 136-144. DOI: 10.1177/1049732313519710
- Bohart, A.C. (1980). Toward a cognitive theory of catharsis. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 17(2), 192-201. DOI: 10.1037/h0085911
- Bolton, R. N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., Loureiro, Y. K., & Solnet, D. (2013). Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Service Management*, 24(3), 245-267. DOI: 10.1108/09564231311326987
- Boren, J. P. (2014). The relationships between co-rumination, social support, stress, and burnout among working adults. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(1), 3-25. DOI: 10.1177/0893318913509283
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M Camic, D . L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
- Brown, S. P., Westbrook, R. A., & Challagalla, G. (2005). Good cope, bad cope: Adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies following a critical negative work event. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(4), 792. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.792

## REFERENCES

- Brownell, A., & Shumaker, S. A. (1984). Social support: An introduction to a complex phenomenon. *Journal of Social Issues*, 40(4), 1-9. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1984.tb01104.x
- Bushman, B. J. (2002). Does venting anger feed or extinguish the flame? Catharsis, rumination, distraction, anger, and aggressive responding. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(6), 724-731. DOI: 10.1177/0146167202289002
- Bushman, B. J., Baumeister, R. F., & Phillips, C. M. (2001). Do people aggress to improve their mood? Catharsis beliefs, affect regulation opportunity, and aggressive responding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(1), 17-32. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.81.1.17
- Callister, R. R., Geddes, D., & Gibson, D. F. (2017). When is anger helpful or hurtful? Status and role impact on anger expression and outcomes. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 10(2), 69-87. DOI: 10.1111/ncmr.12090
- Carlson, K. (2014). Social media and the workplace: How I learned to stop worrying and love privacy settings and the NLRB. *Florida Law Review Online*, 66(1), 479-510. Retrieved from <http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/uflr66&div=14&id=&page=>
- Carver, C. S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61(1), 679-704. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100352
- Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.F. and Weintraub, J.K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(2). 267-283. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.56.2.267
- Chatterton, T. (2013, April 3). Man fired over Facebook photos. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/8503133/Man-fired-over-Facebook-photos>
- Choi, M., & Toma, C. L. (2014). Social sharing through interpersonal media: Patterns and effects on emotional well-being. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36(1), 530-541. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.026

## REFERENCES

- Coe, P. (2015). The social media paradox: An intersection with freedom of expression and the criminal law. *Information & Communications Technology Law*, 24(1), 16-40. DOI: 10.1080/13600834.2015.1004242
- Cole, D. A., Nick, E. A., Zelkowitz, R. L., Roeder, K. M., & Spinelli, T. (2017). Online social support for young people: Does it recapitulate in-person social support; can it help? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68(1), 456-464. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.058
- Cox Edmondson, V. (2006). Organizational surveys: A system for employee voice. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 34(4), 307-310. DOI 10.1080/00909880600908526
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark-Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264. DOI: 10.1177/0011000006287390
- Da Cunha, J. V., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2008). Performing catharsis: The use of online discussion forums in organizational change. *Information and Organization*, 18(2), 132-156. DOI: 10.1016/j.infoandorg.2008.02.001
- Davis, S. D. (2012). Social media activity & the workplace: Updating the status of social media. *Ohio Northern University Law Review*, 39(1), 359-385. Retrieved from [http://law.onu.edu/sites/default/files/Davis\\_0.pdf](http://law.onu.edu/sites/default/files/Davis_0.pdf)
- Day, A.L., & Livingstone, H. (2001). Chronic and acute stressors among military personnel: Do coping styles buffer their negative impact on health?. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 6(4), 348-360. DOI: 10.1037/1076-8998.6.4.348
- Dennis, C. M. (2010). Legal implications of employee social media use. *Massachusetts Law Review*, 93(4), 380-395. Retrieved from <https://massbar.org/media/1029395/legal%20implications%20.pdf>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *Handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## REFERENCES

- Derks, D., Fischer, A. H., & Bos, A. E. R. (2008). The role of emotion in computer mediated communication: A review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(3), 766-785. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2007.04.004
- Donovan, S., O'Sullivan, M., Doyle, E., & Garvey, J. (2016). *Employee voice and silence in auditing firms*. *Employee Relations*, 38(4), 563-577. DOI: 10.1108/ER-05-2015-0078
- Draper, S. (2013). *University of Glasgow: Social constructivism* [Lecture notes]. Retrieved from <http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/courses/archive/CERE12-13-safari-archive/topic3/webarchive-index.html>
- Duprez, C., Christophe, V., Rimé, B., Congard, A., & Antoine, P. (2015). Motives for the social sharing of an emotional experience. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 32(6), 757-787. DOI: 10.1177/0265407514548393
- Eagleton, T. (2008). *Literary theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing
- Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43(1), 13-35. DOI: 10.1163/156916212X632943
- Facebook Newsroom. (2016). *Company Info: Statistics*. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>
- Facebook. (2016). *'Help Talleys Affco Workers' Facebook page*. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/helptalleysaffcoworkers/?fref=ts>
- Feeney, B. C., & Collins, N. L. (2015). A new look at social support: A theoretical perspective on thriving through relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 19(2), 113-147. DOI: 10.1177/1088868314544222
- Fieseler, C., Meckel, M., & Ranzini, G. (2015). Professional personae: How organizational identification shapes online identity in the workplace. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(2), 153-170. DOI: 10.1111/jcc4.12103

## REFERENCES

- Fitness, J. (2000). Anger in the workplace: An emotion script approach to anger episodes between workers and their superiors, co-workers and subordinates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21(2)147-162. DOI: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(200003)21:2<147::AID-JOB35>3.0.CO;2-T
- Folkman, S. and Lazarus, R.S. (1985). If it changes it must be a process: Study of emotion and coping during three stages of a college examination. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 48(1), 150-170. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.48.1.150
- Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J. T. (2004). Coping: Pitfalls and promise. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 55(1). 745-774. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.141456
- Fosnot, C. T. (2013). *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Geddes, D., & Callister, R. R. (2007). Crossing the line (s): A dual threshold model of anger in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3), 721-746. DOI: 10.5465/AMR.2007.25275495
- Generation Y. (2016). *Generation Y and Social Media*. Retrieved from <http://www.generationy.com/about-generation-y-in-the-workforce/generation-y-social-media/>
- Gonzalez, D. (2014). *Managing online risk: Apps, mobile, and social media security*. Waltham, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Gossett, L. M., & Kilker, J. (2006). My job sucks: Examining counterinstitutional web sites as locations for organizational member voice, dissent, and resistance. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20(1), 63-90. DOI: 10.1177/0893318906291729
- Goussinsky, R. (2012). Coping with customer aggression. *Journal of Service Management*, 23(2), 170-196. DOI: 10.1108/09564231211226105
- Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 95-110. Doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.95

## REFERENCES

- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American journal of sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380. DOI: 10.1086/225469
- Granovetter, M. (1983). The strength of weak ties: A network theory revisited. *Sociological theory*, 1(1983), 201-233. DOI: 10.2307/202051
- Grbich, C. (2012). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 42-55. DOI: 10.1177/160940690400300101
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1st ed., pp. 105-117). London, United Kingdom: Sage.
- Hammersley, M. (2000). *Taking sides in social research: Essays on partisanship and bias* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge
- Heck, A. K., Bedeian, A. G., & Day, D. V. (2005). Mountains out of molehills? Tests of the mediating effects of self-esteem in predicting workplace complaining. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35(11), 2262-2289. DOI: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2005.tb02102.x
- Hidalgo, C. R., Tan, E. S. H., & Verlegh, P. W. J. (2015). The social sharing of emotion (SSE) in online social networks: A case study in live journal. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52(1), 364-372. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.05.009
- Holland, P., Cooper, B. K., & Hecker, R. (2016). Use of social media at work: a new form of employee voice?. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(21), 2621-2634. DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2016.1227867
- Husin, M. H., & Hanisch, J. (2011a, October). *Social media and organisation policy (SOMEOP): Finding the perfect balance*. Paper presented at the 19th European Conference on Information Systems, Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved from <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1252&context=ecis2011>

## REFERENCES

- Husin, M., & Hanisch, J. (2011b, October). Utilising the social media and organisation policy (SOMEOP) framework: An example of organisational policy development within a public sector entity. Paper presented at the 19th European Conference on Information Systems, Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved from <http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2011/264/>
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Hyslop, L., & Truebridge, N. (2014, September 12). Kidicorp manager fired for Facebook like. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/better-business/10491119/Kidicorp-manager-fired-for-Facebook-like>
- Idhe, D. (1986). *Experimental phenomenology: An introduction*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Immordino-Yang, M. H., Christodoulou, J. A., & Singh, V. (2012). Rest is not idleness: Implications of the brain's default mode for human development and education. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7(4), 352-364. DOI: 10.1177/1745691612447308
- Infante, D. A. (1995). Teaching students to understand and control verbal aggression. *Communication Education*, 44(1), 51-63. DOI: 10.1080/03634529509378997
- Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(42), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1718&context=tqr>
- Jacobson, W. S., & Tufts, S. H. (2013). To post or not to post: Employee rights and social media. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 33(1), 84-107. DOI: 10.1177/0734371X12443265
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003
- Kassing, J. W. (2002). Speaking up: Identifying employees' upward dissent strategies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16(2), 187-209. DOI: 10.1177/089331802237234

## REFERENCES

- Kellett, P., & Hede, A. M. (2013). Web 2.0 innovations in events: human resource management issues. In A. M. Munar, S. Gyimóthy, & L. Cai (Eds.), *Tourism in social media: transformations in identity, community and culture* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp 193-205). Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing
- Kelly, A. E., Klusas, J. A., von Weiss, R. T., & Kenny, C. (2001). What is it about revealing secrets that is beneficial?. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(6), 651-665. DOI: 10.1177/0146167201276002
- Kemp, S. (2015). *Digital, social & mobile worldwide: We Are Social*. Retrieved from <http://wearesocial.net/blog/2015/01/digital-social-mobileworldwide-2015/>
- Kennedy, R. (2013). Sharing is airing: Employee concerted activity on social media after hispanics united. *Duke Law. & Technology Review*, 12(1), 182-199. Retrieved from <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1265&context=dltr>
- Kensit, D. A. (2000). Rogerian theory: A critique of the effectiveness of pure client-centred therapy. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 13(4), 345-351. 10.1080/713658499
- Klaas, B. S., Olson-Buchanan, J. B., & Ward, A. K. (2012). The determinants of alternative forms of workplace voice an integrative perspective. *Journal of Management*, 38(1), 314-345. DOI: 10.1177/0149206311423823
- Kowalski, R. M. (1996). Complaints and complaining: functions, antecedents, and consequences. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(2), 179- 196. DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.119.2.179
- KPMG. (2012). *Human resources and social media: Does your social media keep you up at night? What you need to know about opportunities and risks for your workforce*. Retrieved from <https://www.kpmg.com/US/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/human-resources-and-social-media.pdf>
- Kulik, C. T., Pepper, M. B., Shapiro, D. L., & Cregan, C. (2012). The electronic water Cooler: Insiders and outsiders talk about organizational justice on the internet. *Communication Research*, 39(5), 565-591. DOI: 10.1177/0093650211429286



## REFERENCES

- Lam, H. (2016). Social media dilemmas in the employment context. *Employee Relations*, 38(3), 420-437. DOI: 10.1108/ER-04-2015-0072
- Landers, R. N., & Goldberg, A. S. (2014). Online social media in the workplace: A conversation with employees. In M. D. Coovert, L F. Thompson. *The psychology of workplace technology* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp. 284-306). New York, NY: Routledge
- Lane, A. M., & Terry, P. C. (2000). The nature of mood: Development of a conceptual model with a focus on depression. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 12(1), 16-33. DOI: 10.1080/10413200008404211
- Lester, S. (1999). *Research method course, Middlesex University: An introduction to phenomenological research [Course notes]*. Retrieved from <http://devmts.org.uk/resmethy.pdf>
- Lett, H. S., Blumenthal, J. A., Babyak, M. A., Catellier, D. J., Carney, R. M., Berkman, L. F., Burg, M. M., Mitchell, P., Jaffe, A. S. & Schneiderman, N. (2007). Social support and prognosis in patients at increased psychosocial risk recovering from myocardial infarction. *Health Psychology*, 26(4), 418. DOI: 10.1037/0278-6133.26.4.418
- Leung, L. (2013). Generational differences in content generation in social media: The roles of the gratifications sought and of narcissism. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(3), 997-1006. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.028
- Levy, M. (2015, December 2). Hotel worker sacked over abusive Facebook post to columnist. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/world/74631357/hotel-worker-sacked-over-abusive-facebook-post-to-columnist>
- Liebler, R., & Chaney, K. (2014). Here we are now, entertain us: Defining the line between personal and professional context on social media. *Pace Law Review*, 35(1), 398-454. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1887&context=plr>
- Lin, T. (2015, December 2). Poor Facebook behaviour could amount to justified dismissal in NZ. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/74652550/Poor-Facebook-behaviour-could-amount-to-justified-dismissal-in-NZ>

## REFERENCES

- Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A. & Guba, E. G. (2011) Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 97-128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Liu, E., & Roloff, M. E. (2016). Regret for complaint withholding. *Communication Quarterly*, 64(1), 72-92. DOI: 10.1080/01463373.2015.1103280
- Liu, Y., Wang, M., Chang, C. H., Shi, J., Zhou, L., & Shao, R. (2015). Work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and displaced aggression toward others: The moderating roles of workplace interpersonal conflict and perceived managerial family support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(3), 792-798. DOI: 10.1037/a0038387
- López-López, I., Ruiz-de-Maya, S., & Warlop, L. (2014). When sharing consumption emotions with strangers is more satisfying than sharing them with friends. *Journal of Service Research*, 17(4), 475-488. DOI: 10.1177/1094670514538835
- Manchester Metropolitan University: Online Research Methods Resource for Teachers and Trainers. (2005). *Module: Selection of the research paradigm and methodology*. Retrieved from [http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/researchmethods/Modules/Selection\\_of\\_methodology/](http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/researchmethods/Modules/Selection_of_methodology/)
- Martin, G., Parry, E., & Flowers, P. (2015). Do social media enhance constructive employee voice all of the time or just some of the time? *Human Resource Management Journal*, 25(4), 541-562. DOI: 10.1111/1748-8583.12081
- Martin, M. M., Dunleavy, K. N., & Kennedy-Lightsey, C. D. (2010). The instrumental use of verbally aggressive messages. In T. A. Avtgis & A. S. Rancer (Eds.), *Arguments, aggression, and conflict: New directions in theory and research* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp. 400-415). New York, NY: Routledge
- Martin, R. C., Coyier, K. R., VanSistine, L. M., & Schroeder, K. L. (2013). Anger on the Internet: The perceived value of rant-sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(2), 119-122. DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2012.0130.
- McDonald, P., & Thompson, P. (2016). Social media (tion) and the reshaping of public/private boundaries in employment relations. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 18(1), 69-84. DOI: 10.1111/ijmr.12061

## REFERENCES

- McGinley, A. C., & McGinley-Stempel, R. P. (2012). Beyond the water cooler: Speech and the workplace in an era of social media. *Hofstra Labor and Employment Law Journal*, 30(1), 75-119. Retrieved from <http://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1540&context=hlelj>
- McGoldrick, D. (2013). The limits of freedom of expression on Facebook and social networking sites: A UK perspective. *Human Rights Law Review*, 13(1), 125-151. DOI: 10.1093/hrlr/ngt005
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, S. J., & Mangold, W. G. (2014). Employee voice: Untapped resource or social media time bomb?. *Business Horizons*, 57(3), 401-411. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2013.12.011
- Miles, S. J., & Muuka, G. N. (2011). Employee choice of voice: a new workplace dynamic. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 27(4), 91-103. DOI: 10.19030/jabr.v27i4.4659
- Miller, W. L., & Crabtree, B. F. (1992). Primary care research: A multimethod typology and qualitative road map. In B. F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research (Vol 3): Research methods for primary care 3 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Montero-Marin, J., Prado-Abril, J., Demarzo, M. M. P., Gascon, S., & García-Campayo, J. (2014). Coping with stress and types of burnout: explanatory power of different coping strategies. *Public Library of Science*, 9(2), e89090. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0089090
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mukosolu, O., Ibrahim, F., Rampal, G., Rampal, L., & Ibrahim, N. (2015). Prevalence of job stress and its associated factors among Universiti Putra Malaysia staff. *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, 11(1), 27-38. Retrieved from <http://psasir.upm.edu.my/41444/1/Prevalence%20of%20job%20stress%20and%20its%20associated%20factors%20among%20Universiti%20Putra%20Malaysia%20staff.pdf>

## REFERENCES

- Myddleton, J., & Fullwood, C. (2016). Social Media Impact on Organisations. In A. A. Attrill, C. Fullwood (Eds.), *Applied Cyberpsychology: Practical Applications of Cyberpsychological Theory and Research* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp. 216-235). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan
- Myers, C. (2014). The new water cooler: Implications for practitioners concerning the NLRB's stance on social media and workers' rights. *Public Relations Review*, 40(3), 547-555. DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.03.006
- Naaman, M., Boase, J., & Lai, C. H. (2010, February). *Is it really about me?: Message content in social awareness streams*. Paper presented at the 2010 ACM conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Savannah, GA, USA. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jeffrey\\_Boase/publication/220878832\\_Is\\_it\\_Really\\_About\\_Me\\_Message\\_Content\\_in\\_Social\\_Awareness\\_Streams/links/0f317531cdab0b700d000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jeffrey_Boase/publication/220878832_Is_it_Really_About_Me_Message_Content_in_Social_Awareness_Streams/links/0f317531cdab0b700d000000.pdf)
- Nadkarni, A., & Hofmann, S. G. (2012). Why do people use Facebook?. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52(3), 243-249. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2011.11.007
- Nazaré, B., Fonseca, A., & Canavarro, M. C. (2013). Adaptive and maladaptive grief responses following TOPFA: Actor and partner effects of coping strategies. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 31(3), 257-273. DOI: 10.1080/02646838.2013.806789
- Neal, L. K. (2012). Virtual water cooler and the NLRB: Concerted activity in the age of Facebook. *Washington & Lee Law Review*, 69(3), 1715-1758. Retrieved from <http://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4294&context=wlulr>
- Nelson, N. G., Dell'Olive, C., Koch, C., & Buckler, R. (2001). Stress, coping, and success among graduate students in clinical psychology. *Psychological Reports*, 88(3), 759-767. DOI: 10.2466/pr0.2001.88.3.759
- Neubaum, G., Rösner, L., Rosenthal-von der Pütten, A. M., & Krämer, N. C. (2014). Psychosocial functions of social media usage in a disaster situation: A multi-methodological approach. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 34(1), 28-38. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.01.021
- Ng, J. C. Y., Shao, I. Y. T., & Liu, Y. (2016). This is not what I wanted: The effect of avoidance coping strategy on non-work-related social media use at the workplace. *Employee Relations*, 38(4), 466-486. DOI: 10.1108/ER-12-2015-0216

## REFERENCES

- Nils, F., & Rimé, B. (2012). Beyond the myth of venting: Social sharing modes determine the benefits of emotional disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42(6), 672-681. DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.1880
- Oatley, K., Keltner, D., & Jenkins, J. M. (1996). *Understanding emotions* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford, United Kingdom: Backwell.
- O'Connor, K. W., Schmidt, G. B., & Drouin, M. (2015). Helping workers understand and follow social media policies. *Business Horizons*. 59(2), 205-211. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2015.11.005
- Oxford Dictionary Online. (2016). *Definition of 'Vent'*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/vent>)
- Oxford Dictionary Online. (2017) *Definition of 'Meme'*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/meme>
- Oxford Dictionary Online. (2017). *Definition of 'App'*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/app>
- Park, N., Kee, K.F., & Valenzuela, S. (2009). Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes, *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 12 (6), 729-733. DOI: 10.1089/cpb.2009.0003
- Parlami, J. D. (2012). Venting as emotion regulation: The influence of venting responses and respondent identity on anger and emotional tone. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 23(1), 77-96. DOI: 10.1108/10444061211199322
- Parra-Lopez, E., Bulchand-Gidumal, J., Gutierrez-Tano, D., & Diaz-Armas, R. (2011). Intentions to use social media in organizing and taking vacation trips. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(2), 640-654. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2010.05.022
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## REFERENCES

- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: integrating theory and practice : the definitive text of qualitative inquiry frameworks and options* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8(3), 162-166. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.1997.tb00403.x
- Pentina, I., & Zhang, L. (2017). Effects of social support and personality on emotional disclosure on Facebook and in real life. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 36(5), 484-492. DOI: 10.1080/0144929X.2016.1258086
- Petko, D., Egger, N., Schmitz, F. M., Totter, A., Hermann, T., & Guttormsen, S. (2015). Coping through blogging: A review of studies on the potential benefits of weblogs for stress reduction. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 9(2), 64-79. DOI: 10.5817/CP2015-2-5
- Reinecke, L., & Trepte, S. (2014). Authenticity and well-being on social network sites: A two-wave longitudinal study on the effects of online authenticity and the positivity bias in SNS communication. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30(1), 95-102. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.030
- Richards, J. (2008). 'Because I need somewhere to vent': The expression of conflict through work blogs. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 23(1-2), 95-110. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-005X.2008.00205.x
- Richards, J., & Kosmala, K. (2013). 'In the end, you can only slag people off for so long': Employee cynicism through work blogging. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 28(1), 66-77. DOI: 10.1111/ntwe.12004
- Rimé, B. (2009). Emotion elicits the social sharing of emotion: Theory and empirical review. *Emotion Review*, 1(1), 60-85. DOI: 10.1177/1754073908097189
- Robinson, V. (2010, December 17). 'Expensive paperweight' fired after Facebook posts. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/4472229/Expensive-paperweight-fired-after-Facebook-posts>

## REFERENCES

- Roloff, M. E., & Solomon, D. H. (2002). Conditions under which relational commitment leads to expressing or withholding relational complaints. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 276-391. DOI: 10.1108/eb022877
- Sage Research Methods Online. (2016). *Phenomenology*. Retrieved from <http://methods.sagepub.com/methods-map/phenomenology>
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schmidt, G. B., & O'Connor, K. W. (2015). Fired for Facebook: Using NLRB guidance to craft appropriate social media policies. *Business Horizons*, 58(5), 571-579. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2015.05.008
- Schoneboom, A. (2011). Workblogging in a Facebook age. *Work, Employment & Society*, 25(1), 132-140. DOI: 10.1177/0950017010389247
- Shami, N. S., Yang, J., Panc, L., Dugan, C., Ratchford, T., Rasmussen, J. C., Assogba, Y., Steier, T., Soule, T., Lupushor, S., Geyer, W., Guy, I. & Ferrar, J. (2014, February). *Understanding employee social media chatter with enterprise social pulse*. Paper presented at the 2014 ACM conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Baltimore, MD, USA. Retrieved from <http://research.ibm.com/haifa/dept/imt/papers/shamiCSCW14.pdf>
- Shoss, M. K., Maurer, A. H., & Rupperecht, E. A. (2013). My boss is probably the devil! Exploring employees online vents. In N. M., Ashkanasy, W. J. Zerbe (Eds.), *Research on emotions in organisations (Vol 9): Individual sources, dynamics, and expressions of emotion* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp 249-260). Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing
- Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Spallek, H., Turner, S. P., Donate-Bartfield, E., Chambers, D., McAndrew, M., Zarkowski, P., & Karimbux, N. (2015). Social media in the dental school environment- Part A: Benefits, challenges, and recommendations for use. *Journal of Dental Education*, 79(10), 1140-1152. DOI: 10.1140-1152

## REFERENCES

- Stanton, A. L., & Franz, R. (1999). Focusing on emotion: An adaptive coping strategy. In C. R. Snyder (Ed.), *Coping: The psychology of what works* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp 90-118). New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- Stickney, L. T., & Geddes, D. (2016). More than just “blowing off steam”: The roles of anger and advocacy in promoting positive outcomes at work. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 9(2), 141-157. DOI: 10.1111/ncmr.12071
- Tan-Kristanto, S., & Kiropoulos, L. A. (2015). Resilience, self-efficacy, coping styles and depressive and anxiety symptoms in those newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 20(6), 635-645. DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2014.999810
- Tapscott, D. (2009). *Grown up digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- TechTarget (2017). *Definition of 'Instagram'*. Retrieved from <http://whatis.techtarget.com/search/query?q=instagram>
- TechTarget (2017). *Definition of 'LinkedIn'*. Retrieved from <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/LinkedIn>
- TechTarget (2017). *Definition of 'MySpace'*. Retrieved from <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/MySpace>
- TechTarget (2017) *What is Snapchat?*. Retrieved from <http://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/definition/Snapchat>
- TechTarget. (2017) *Definition of 'Twitter'*. Retrieved from <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Twitter>
- The Human Element. (2009). *Paradigms in research; or, how your worldview shapes your methodology*. Retrieved from <https://mackle.wordpress.com/2009/04/21/paradigms-in-research-or-how-your-worldview-shapes-your-methodology/>



## REFERENCES

- Thøgersen, J., Juhl, H. J., & Poulsen, C. S. (2009). Complaining: A function of attitude, personality, and situation. *Psychology & Marketing*, 26(8), 760-777. DOI: 10.1002/mar.20298
- Thorntwaite, L. (2015). Chilling times: social media policies, labour law and employment relations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 53(3), Doi: 10.1111/17447941.12074
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. DOI: 10.1177/1077800410383121
- Tufts, S. H., Jacobson, W. S., & Stevens, M. S. (2015). Status update: Social media and local government human resource practices. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 35(2), 193-207. DOI: 10.1177/0734371X14558066
- Turner III, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1178&context=tqr>
- Urista, M. A., Dong, Q., & Day, K. D. (2009). Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through uses and gratifications theory. *Human Communication*, 12(2), 215-229. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rebecca\\_Merkin/publication/255578386\\_Cross-Cultural\\_Differences\\_in\\_Avoidance\\_Communication\\_In\\_South\\_Korea\\_and\\_the\\_US/links/0a85e5340f0cd8bf73000000.pdf#page=98](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rebecca_Merkin/publication/255578386_Cross-Cultural_Differences_in_Avoidance_Communication_In_South_Korea_and_the_US/links/0a85e5340f0cd8bf73000000.pdf#page=98)
- Valkenburg, P. M., Peter, J., & Schouten, A. P. (2006). Friend networking sites and their relationship to adolescents' well-being and social self-esteem. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 9(5), 584-590. DOI: 10.1089/cpb.2006.9.584
- Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- van Ingen, E., & Wright, K. B. (2016). Predictors of mobilizing online coping versus offline coping resources after negative life events. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 59(1), 431-439. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.02.048

## REFERENCES

- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Veer, E., Ozanne, L. K., & Hall, C. M. (2015). Sharing cathartic stories online: The internet as a means of expression following a crisis event. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 15(4), 314-324. DOI: 10.1002/cb.1569
- Vent! Vent. (2016). *Angry, Frustrated, outraged, annoyed?* Retrieved from <http://www.ventvent.com/complaint.php>
- Vergeer, M., & Pelzer, B. (2009). Consequences of media and Internet use for offline and online network capital and well-being. A causal model approach. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15(1), 189-210. DOI: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01499.x
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Wadey, R., Podlog, L., Hall, M., Hamson-Utley, J., Hicks-Little, C., & Hammer, C. (2014). Reinjury anxiety, coping, and return-to-sport outcomes: A multiple mediation analysis. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 59(3), 256-266. DOI: 10.1037/a0037032
- Wendorf, J. E., & Yang, F. (2015). Benefits of a negative post: Effects of computer-mediated venting on relationship maintenance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52(1), 271-277. DOI:10.1016/j.chb.2015.05.040
- Wesner, M.S. & Miller, T. (2008). Boomers and millenials have much in common. *Organizational Development Journal*. 26(3), 89-96. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/198009222?pq-origsite=gscholar>
- Wheeler, L. and Caggiula, A.R. (1966). The contagion of aggression. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 2(1), 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/0022-1031(66)90002-3
- Work Rant. (2016). *Release your work-related stress! #workrant*. Retrieved from <http://www.workrant.com/>

## REFERENCES

- Worthington, M. (2010). *Differences between phenomenological research and a basic qualitative research design* [Lecture notes]. Retrieved from <http://a1149861.sites.myregisteredsite.com/DifferencesBetweenPhenomenologicalResearchAndBasicQualitativeResearchDesign.pdf>
- Wranik, T. (2011). Anger at work: Why do we get angry and what can and should we do about it? In F. Pahlavan (Ed.), *Multiple facets of anger: Getting mad or restoring justice?* (1st ed., pp. 119-146). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.
- Wright, K. B., & Bell, S. B. (2003). Health-related support groups on the internet: Linking empirical findings to social support and computer-mediated communication theory. *Journal of Health Psychology, 8*(1), 39-54. DOI: 10.1177/1359105303008001429
- Wright, K. B., & Miller, C. H. (2010). A measure of weak-tie/strong-tie support network preference. *Communication Monographs, 77*(4), 500-517. DOI: 10.1080/03637751.2010.502538
- Yang, I. (2014). Social sharing of private emotions within a group: the case of positive and negative emotions. *Organisational and Social Dynamics, 14*(2), 285-321. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1629022221/fulltextPDF/FA48D7463DBE4AE2PQ/1?accountid=34374>
- Zaki, J., & Williams, W. C. (2013). Interpersonal emotion regulation. *Emotion, 13*(5), 803-810. DOI: 10.1037/a0033839
- Zhang, R. (2017). The stress-buffering effect of self-disclosure on Facebook: An examination of stressful life events, social support, and mental health among college students. *Computers in Human Behavior, 75*(1), 527-537. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.05.043

## APPENDIX

### Appendix

#### Appendix A: Recruiting Advertisement (Facebook)

Hi Facebook friends

As some of you may know, I am currently doing my Master's, and over the next 6 months I will be working on my research and thesis.

My research aims to investigate venting about work on Facebook, and so I am seeking participants who are willing to share their stories with me.

To be eligible, participants must be:

- Aged between 18-36;
- Have vented about work on Facebook.
- Available for an interview (either face to face or via Skype) between September and mid-November. The interviews should take about 1 hour.

In exchange for your time, you will receive a \$20 Westfield or Petrol voucher, plus drinks and snacks during the interview (as well as warm fuzzies knowing you have contributed to research!)

If you are eager to participate please get in contact. Alternatively, if you know anyone that might be, please pass on my details because I would love to hear from them! Even sharing this post would be a massive help to me 😊

Please contact Andrea Thomson – [andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) or by sending me a private message on Facebook

Hugest thanks in advance

Appendix B: Recruiting Advertisement (Print Flyers)

# Have you vented about work on Facebook??

**Participants needed for Master's  
research, about venting on social  
media about work.**

To be eligible, participants must be:

- aged between 18-36;
- have vented about work on Facebook, and
- Available for an interview (either face to face or via skype) between September and mid-November. The interview should take about 1 hour.

**Participants will receive a \$20 Westfield or Petrol  
voucher for their contribution, plus drinks and  
snacks during the interview (as well as warm  
fuzzies knowing you have contributed to  
research!)**

This research project has  
been approved by the  
Human Ethics Committee  
of the University of  
Canterbury.

**If you are eager to  
participate, or  
would like more  
information,  
please get in  
contact:**

Scan the QR code  
or email  
[andrea.thomson@pg.  
canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



**THANKS!**

## APPENDIX

### Appendix C: UC Ethics Approval



#### HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson  
Telephone: +64 03 364 2987, Extn 45588  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Ref: HEC 2016/81

17 August 2016

Andrea Thomson  
Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Andrea

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal "A Phenomenological Study of Gen-Y Motivations When They Have Vented About Work on Facebook" has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 8<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

*pp. R. Robinson*

Jane Maidment  
*Chair*  
*University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

## APPENDIX

### Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
Telephone: +64 27 7588224  
Email: [amt107@uclive.ac.nz](mailto:amt107@uclive.ac.nz) or [andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



#### **Venting about work on Facebook: Information Sheet for Participants**

*I am a Masters Student from the University of Canterbury. I am researching Gen-Y employees who have vented about their work on social media (Facebook) for personal purposes. The research aims to interview participants to gain an understanding of their experiences when they have vented about work on Facebook.*

If you choose to participate, your involvement in this project will be to talk about your experiences and opinions regarding a time when you have initiated a conversation on your own personal social media account, venting about your work (this can include: colleagues, supervisors/managers, clients, stakeholders, the tasks you do, events that have happened at work etc.) You will be asked to provide a copy of the post to the researcher, and will be invited to discuss this during a one-on-one interview. The initial interview should last no more than 1 hour and will be audio and video recorded. As a follow-up to this investigation, you may be invited for one further interview lasting up to one hour if required by the researcher.

During the interview there may be a risk of emotional distress, through the recollection of past events. If this is the case, please advise the interviewer to stop the interview immediately.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. You may ask for your raw data to be returned to you or destroyed at any point. If you withdraw, I will remove information relating to you. However, once analysis of raw data starts, it will become increasingly difficult to remove the influence of your data on the results.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the use of a pseudonym will replace your name on the transcripts, to protect your identity. My research Supervisors **Dr Ekant Veer** and **Mr Russell Wordsworth** will also have access to the data, to support me during the research process. To assist with the transcription process, I may employ an assistant to transcribe the interviews. The transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing working with the data. Digital copies of data will be stored on a secure, password-protected computer in the Commerce postgraduate office, with consent sheets stored separately in either **Dr Veer** or **Mr Wordsworth's** offices. In line with the University of Canterbury's policies, all data (both digital and hard copies) will be held for 5 years and then securely destroyed, with the exception of the video recordings, which will be destroyed immediately after analysis has been completed. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UCLibrary.

Please indicate to the researcher on the consent form if you would like to receive a copy of the summary of results of the project.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for a Masters in Commerce (Management) by Andrea Thomson under the supervision of **Dr Ekant Veer** and **Mr Russell Wordsworth**, who can be contacted at [Ekant.Veer@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:Ekant.Veer@canterbury.ac.nz) or [Russell.Wordsworth@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:Russell.Wordsworth@canterbury.ac.nz). They both will be able to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form and return to me prior to commencing your interview.

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Thomson'.

Andrea Thomson

## APPENDIX

### Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship  
Telephone: +64 27 7588224  
Email: [amt107@uclive.ac.nz](mailto:amt107@uclive.ac.nz) or [andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



### Venting about work on Facebook Consent Form for Participants

*Please read carefully, and sign at the bottom of the page once you have understood and accepted the terms below:*

- ☐ I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.
- ☐ I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.
- ☐ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher Andrea Thomson, Dr Ekant Veer, Mr Russell Wordsworth and a research assistant used to transcribe the interviews, and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants, or their employer. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- ☐ I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years, with the exception of the video recordings which will be destroyed once analysis has been completed. No data will be stored indefinitely.
- ☐ I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.
- ☐ I understand that I can contact the researcher Andrea Thomson ([andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrea.thomson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)) or supervisor Dr Ekant Veer ([ekant.veer@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:ekant.veer@canterbury.ac.nz)) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).
- ☐ I would like a summary of the results of the project
- ☐ By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: (if you wish to receive a report of findings): \_\_\_\_\_

*Once signed, please return to the research, prior to commencing your interview.*

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Thomson'.

Andrea Thomson



## APPENDIX

### Appendix F: Pre-Interview Questionnaire

*Sent to participants via email*

Dear <<name of participant>>

Thank you so much for expressing an interest in participating in my research, I really appreciate it. Have a read through below, it's all a bit formal but have to do it to comply with ethics. I have attached an information sheet and consent forms for your reference- it gives some details about my research, the interview process and what you might expect. During the interview, you would be asked to recall a specific time you have vented on Facebook about work.

As mentioned, I have a few preliminary questions. The purpose of this is so that I am able to decide the order I should interview each of my participants. If you are happy to let me know the details below that would be fantastic (all details will be kept confidential)

***Name:***

***Birth year (for my reference so that I know you are a Gen-Y er)***

***Ethnicity:***

***Country of birth:***

***Country that you completed any primary/secondary education:***

***Highest education level to date:***

***Country that you completed any tertiary education (if applicable):***

***Interview preference – Face to face or Skype?:***

***The Industry you were employed in at the time of the respective Facebook post:***

***Private or public sector?***

***Role (at the time of the Facebook post):***

***Brief description of the circumstances surrounding the FB post***

***Would you be able and willing to provide a screen shot of the Facebook post? (any identifying features would be blanked out) Yes or no***

If you have any questions, concerns or hesitations, please let me (or my research supervisors) know. Our contact details are on the information sheet

I hope to be in touch over the coming weeks and hugest thank you in advance.

Andrea

## APPENDIX

### Appendix G: Interview Protocol

Adapted from Jacob & Furgerson (2012)

#### Introduction

- Introduce yourself (the interviewer)
- Interviewers background, interests, about me
- welcome the participant, thank them for volunteering
- ask the participant about themselves, what they do, their interests, ask some insightful questions (find common ground)

#### Explanation of the Study/Purpose of the research

- Provide info sheet to the participant- participants should have already seen this is a prelim meeting had been organized.
- Explain the purpose of this study
- I chose this topic because:

#### Explanation of the Interview process

- I will start with 3 broad questions
- Answer them in any way you like, providing any information that you think is relevant or important.
- There may be instances where you are asked to elaborate and only do so if you feel comfortable. Be as specific and detailed as possible.
- It is anticipated that this interview will go for no longer than 1 hour. Is it ok, if I need to follow up, that we schedule another interview? (only if required!)
- Your confidentiality will be maintained and your responses will not be kept in the same place as any identifying data.
- Remind participant that there are no right or wrong answers and assure confidentiality

#### Recording

- If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation.
- The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you.
- I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential.
- For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes, which will be destroyed after they are transcribed.

***"Thank you for your agreeing to participate. I believe your input will be valuable to this research"***

#### Summary and Closing

The interviewee should be left feeling positive about their experience. Let the participant know that you are coming to the end of the interview "My final question . . . or ...we are about to wrap up"

- highlight key aspects and overall conclusions
- point out areas of agreement and disagreement
- ask the interviewee about the accuracy of your summary

## APPENDIX

### Finally

- Again, the interviewer should thank the participant for taking part and contributing their time and insights towards the research
- Reassurance of confidentiality, as well as the purpose and use of their information
- If applicable, seek permission to return to a participant later in the process. This allows you to ask early participants probe questions that are not developed until later in the process
- Ask them if they have any other questions
- Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to
- Give participants the vouchers and reimburse for parking

### Question Prompts

- Can you elaborate/explain/Tell me more about
- What exactly happened when...?
- Can you describe.../ can you describe the details of...
- What has your experience been with
- What are your thoughts on...?
- How did that make you feel
- What was your train of thought
- What factors...
- What kind of impact did this have on...?
- What decisions did you make which lead to that
- Why do you think that is
- Looking back, would have you acted differently given the consequences? Have your attitudes changed?
- "What do you mean by...?"
- "Then what happened?"
- "can you give me an example"
- "You mentioned that..."
- "Is there anything else...?" Is there anything else that you haven't already mentioned that you would like me to know?
- Provide transition between major topics, e.g., "we've been talking about (some topic) and now I'd like to move on to (another topic)."

Probes should be short and simple to avoid breaking the interviewee's focus. The interviewer may help motivate the respondent (but not bias the responses) by using reinforcing or feedback expressions such as

- "Thanks, this is the sort of information we're looking for in this research."
- "It's important to us to get this information."
- "These details are helpful."
- "It's useful to get your ideas (your opinion) on this."
- "I see; that's useful information."
- "Let me get that down."
- do you have a workplace social media policy?
- What did you hope to achieve by posting?
- Did you think /know what you were doing was wrong?
- How did you justify it to yourself? Why did you do it? Did you think about the consequences?

## APPENDIX

- Why would you vent online instead of to your boss/someone who could do something about it?

### **Non-Verbal Prompts**

- Using silence to encourage elaboration
- Leaning forward to indicate interest
- Eye contact
- Facial expressions – Looking attentive
- Encourage responses with occasional nods of the head, "uh huh"s, etc.
- Movement and mirroring the participants tone of voice and volume
- Signal your interest, but avoid leading the interviewee to respond in particular ways.

### **Strategies if a participant go off topic**

- Keep your original research questions handy to avoid straying from the topic.
- use question prompts (above) if the participant has deviated away from the topic
- move to another question and come back to it again later

## APPENDIX

### Appendix H: Interview Notes Template

#### Interview Notes

**Project: phenomenological study of Gen-Y employees who have vented about work on Facebook.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: Andrea Thomson \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Consent form signed? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Research Questions

RQ1: What factors motivated employees to vent about work?

RQ2: Why was Facebook selected as the platform to vent?

RQ3: What were the consequences of venting on Facebook?

#### Initial questions

1. Can you tell me about the circumstances that lead to your Facebook post?

Probe: can you describe what happened that motivated you post on Facebook

Probe: Why did you say what you said?

Probe: what decisions did you make?

Probe: What did you hope to achieve by your post?

Did anyone respond?

How did their response make you feel?

2. What were the *consequences* of your post on Facebook?

*\*\*consequences, what happened after you posted on Facebook, what happened because/as a result of*

Probe: were there any unintended consequences you hadn't thought about?

Probe dupe: did it achieve what you wanted it too?

3. Why did you choose to use Facebook?

Probe: why did you think it would be better at the time?

Probe dupe: what were you hoping to achieve?

## APPENDIX

Probe dupe: did it achieve what you wanted it too?

### **Reflections by Interviewer**

What was the best quote that came out of the interview?

What was the best story that came out of the interview?

Other pieces of gold dust

Did the respondent seem nervous? tone, body language

Impressions

Reflections

Interpretations

\*Form adapted from:

[https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:C01-gfkAwNII:https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ele/scholars/Results/Workshops/Assessment Institute/Research/Asses%2520Inst%2520Paper%2520Prep%2520-%2520Interview%2520Protocal%2520Form.doc+&cd=10&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=nz](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:C01-gfkAwNII:https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ele/scholars/Results/Workshops/Assessment+Institute/Research/Asses%2520Inst%2520Paper%2520Prep%2520-%2520Interview%2520Protocal%2520Form.doc+&cd=10&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=nz)

## APPENDIX

### Appendix I: Participant Profiles and Self-reported Biography

The following is a brief description of the stories the participants communicated during the interview, told in their own words.

#### Participant 1: Lina

Lina's interview was conducted via Facetime as she was based in Wellington, New Zealand. She came across as confident, friendly and eager to share her experience with the researcher. Lina is a 26-year-old female and at the time of her interview mentioned she was undertaking part time extramural undergraduate study in Physics through Massey University alongside working full time at a Law firm. She was also studying towards attaining her Patent Attorney professional registration. Lina grew up and attended school in Palmerston North, before moving to Wellington. Since moving to Wellington she has worked in the hospitality industry mainly in bars and restaurants until she obtained her current role.

During Lina's interview, she told me about one particular incident where she vented about work on Facebook.

*"I was managing a restaurant/bar in Wellington CBD at the time. While there were three managers who should have rotated shifts so that one of us was on premise at any one time, the other two (who also wrote the rosters together) would always manipulate it so I would have to do all the long hours and rubbish shifts. For example: I would have to set up and open the premise, do the stocktakes and be present for deliveries, stay late until closing and clean down; while they would conveniently do a Friday/Saturday lunch service, and always clock out early over the weekends to drink wine on premise with their friends."*

*"The others were maybe I'd say a little bit older than me and a little bit more experienced. I would've been about 20 years old at the time and they were also – well at the time I thought they were my friends"*

*"I just seemed to be doing like all of the work and the really rubbish hours and they seemed to be kind of coming in when they felt like it and drinking wine with their friends and, you know? And so I kind of felt like they were taking advantage of me but there was no one to talk to"*

*"Essentially I felt like I had to do all the work, and as there was no one I could discuss the situation with (except for them), I became very frustrated. "*

## APPENDIX

After several months of frustration, she posted two separate posts on Facebook. Several days later she was asked by one of the managers to remove the post. This was initially communicated via text message and then again in person.

*"It was a couple of months. Yeah. It definitely wasn't a, you know, this happened last week and I'm venting today. It was an ongoing, you know, things aren't getting better, I'm really annoyed about this and then eventually just ended up posting."*

*"I cannot recall the exact wording of the FB posts, but I had put them as my status. The first one was the phrase "I believe I can see the future, because I repeat the same routine" from a NIN song, alluding to my general distaste for everyday work life. The second post was more clear, basically venting my frustration at how when you work with 'so-called friends' they're supposed to support you, but instead just use you (etc.). "*

*"I don't think it was up for very long. It would've been maybe a day or so before I was contacted by the other manager and told to take it off."*

*"I think either, I don't know if I was friends with her on Facebook but we had mutual friends so I think maybe like a mutual friend had seen it and maybe liked it or whatever and that might've brought it up in her news feed, that she was able to see it."*

*"Yeah I don't think I would have shared... 'Cos it was obvious where I worked at the time and all of my friends would've known so I don't think I would've vented as much as I did had I been actual friends with her on Facebook, you know?"*

*"I think I got a text message because I wasn't at work or, yeah I think I was at home or something and she must've seen it and she texted me something along the lines of, "Seen your status, take it off, everyone knows where you work, not cool," something or rather. And then I got into work and I remember the next day maybe one of the other managers, well like she said something, not like in passing but it wasn't like a dig. She kinda said you know, like, "Don't bitch about work on Facebook," and then kinda just like left it at that."*

*"I think I was more embarrassed than anything that they did it, you know, that they, I dunno, not that they caught me 'cos I didn't really think I was doing anything wrong but that they kind of had a go. It was embarrassing and*



## APPENDIX

*because I was so much younger than them they kind of, they did it in like, like a belittling kind of way and so it was really easy to feel like, I suppose really small when people are doing that you know?"*

*"the big bosses weren't on premise at all so it was kind of, had no one to vent to at work and ended up venting on social media about basically how I thought it was unfair and then unfortunately one of them spotted it and they weren't so happy and I was asked to pull it off."*

*"They just kept happening. Got worse even because they, the other two managers obviously knew that I was venting my frustration but instead of addressing the issue they just got kind of annoyed about it and you know, it all continued and I eventually ended up quitting."*

*"I'd be frustrated for a while and then maybe the three managers, we'd get together one night or something and we'd be all right for a little while or they'd wanna swap shifts or something and I try and accommodate and then, yeah like it would kind of get better and you'd be like, oh it's not so bad and then it would, you know, plateau and then get worse and eventually it would just build and build and build and yeah."*

*"I think I was employed at the company only for about 18 months before I quit. First six months weren't so bad, but by the end of the full term I had truly had enough!"*

*"Probably, probably only like six months you know. Got pretty sick of it and no one was able to address it and I felt trapped and then I couldn't work and I didn't even have another job to go to. I just up and quit."*

When discussing why she chose Facebook rather than attempting to approach the owners of the business, she said:

*"I don't know if I was really hoping to achieve anything because it felt like such a hopeless situation because I had no one to talk to and no way to resolve the issue or so I thought. So I was probably more just venting frustration and maybe hoping that, you know, someone else would've been in a similar situation and maybe would give you advice or even offer their sympathetic ear, you know."*

## APPENDIX

*"I mean I have mentioned it to my friends but if you've ever been a bar manager you work the complete opposite hours to all of your friends. So you're, you know, you might wake up at two in the afternoon, go work, you'll work all night, you'll be there 'til 7.00 am, you'll go home and so all of your friends that are not directly related to the situation, they're not really easily reachable and so I think social media was just kind of there and I was probably awake at a ridiculously silly hour because I was, you know, we call them night-walkers. Yeah so, yeah it was probably just a convenience thing."*

*"I suppose as well that because the three managers, we were supposed to be kind of equal in running the premise. The owners of the bar, I mean, they'd come in for lunch or they'd come in for drinks or what have you but they were not really there in a managerial type sense so it wasn't really like, they didn't get involved, they weren't brought to be involved. It probably wasn't big enough to bother them about and so the other two kind of just had a bit of a go at me and that was it."*

*"I feel like, I mean I definitely vented the frustration that I was feeling at the time and so that short-term effect was gratifying I guess. I guess that the other thing was that there were some other staff who worked in the same premise as me but, say, were kitchen staff or restaurant staff or what have you and maybe they didn't realise, you know, how I was feeling and it kind of brought that to their attention even if it was only on Facebook for a day so. So that was quite beneficial I guess but yeah, otherwise, I mean I didn't really – how much can you really gain from venting, you know?"*

### **Participant 2: Hamish**

Hamish is a 28-year-old male who has worked predominantly in the Information Technology (IT) industry. He has completed NCEA Level 3 as well as several relevant IT Qualifications. Hamish is currently employed in an IT role based in Christchurch, New Zealand. At the time of his Facebook post, he was employed in an IT role for a government sector organisation in a rural town in New Zealand.

Prior to meeting with Hamish, he had provided a description of his experience. Hamish was happy to go into great detail regarding the circumstances surrounding his Facebook post. The event itself happened several years ago, and he worked in the role for around 7 years before relocating to Christchurch in early 2015.

## APPENDIX

When he commenced in his previous role, early on in his employment he realised that his new workplace didn't have a kitchen sink in their staff break area. Instead, there was a 'slops bucket' where staff were to empty any leftover liquid from their mugs into. Hamish expressed his dissatisfaction at what he believed to be an unsatisfactory solution. He mentioned that he and other colleagues had raised this issue with their manager several times and that no response had been provided and no action had been taken. One day, Hamish posted a picture of the full slops bucket on his Facebook wall .

*"So when I, when I very first started, first day I thought oh this is a bit, this is a bit substandard for that sort of place but whatever, and years went by, years went by"*

*"I don't always drink the, all of my drink so it'd be like then a little bit left and so you go and, you know, tip that, the little bit that's left into the slops bucket and make yourself a new drink and sometimes the slops bucket is completely full and you're like okay where do I chuck this last bit of drink so I can make a new one? There's no sink. There's no, anywhere like that to put it so you like tip it out a window, it's not ideal, if no one's around. Or you get pissed off and walk, I dunno, 80 odd metres down the hallway to find a bathroom where you chuck it down the sink there. Course you can't wash your cup either 'cos you gotta pour the boiling water into it and then where does that go, so it'd just been getting more annoying and more annoying and more annoying all the time and we'd been told, oh, well just go and wash out your cup in the toilet sinks. Problem solved."*

*"every performance review we'd have, there'd always be like a question like, you know, what can we do to make your job more enjoyable and I guess it may have come across as a joke but I always just say oh and get a kitchen sink and my manager would have a laugh and write it down but wrote it down nonetheless and you know there was a few people who, well a lot of people actually who were getting pretty pissed off about it but I guess one day – sometimes there'd be more than one slops bucket. "*

*"Sometimes you'd just find you know, like an old paint bucket or something like that that had been used as a slops bucket as well and sometimes you have multiple of them filled up and yeah one day I was just pretty pissed off, potentially wasn't having the greatest of days and went to make a hot drink and sure enough, slops bucket's full so I took a photo of it and didn't think too much*

## APPENDIX

*of it and then I think, oh yeah I might send this to someone and complain. But in the end what I did was I posted it to my, I guess it was a timeline"*

*"Didn't name the employer. Didn't say where – I said it was where I worked which a lot of those people would have known, most of them would have known and said that this is the equivalent of our kitchen sink and something along those lines. Thought it was a bit shit."*

*"Yeah, a small area I guess and by the people who could see it, you know, Facebook friends, they would've known where I worked"*

*"There were...There were a lot of loll's, that type stuff. A few people saying that's disgusting. Just that sort of stuff which I guess when someone does have a rant on social media, what are they – what are they seeking?"*

His manager whom had been made aware of the Facebook post approached Hamish. At the time, Hamish was not entirely sure how it had gotten from his private Facebook wall to his manager, but eventually deduced it was one of his Facebook friends whose father worked in Facilities Management for the same organisation. He was asked by his manager to take down the photo. He recalls the meeting with his manager.

*"He came in and said hey, can we have a chat about something? Friendly chat is what I guess he likes to call it when I guess it's, this isn't – a formal chat? I guess that's – is that a HR, what they'd call it? A formal chat or a formal – not a warning but like a ..."*

*"So I got called into the office and closed the door type thing and, "Hey I understand you've posted a picture of the, the staff room onto Facebook and that type stuff and you know, it's been brought to my attention." "Oh, well how did it get brought to your attention?" "Well that's not your concern," and just saying about, "There is a social media policy and I'd advise you to read it and what you've done here is you've, you've damaged – it's potentially damaging to the organisation's reputation, bringing the organisation into disrepute which is serious misconduct," which I sorta went, "Woah, woah, hang on a minute here. This is a bit... Don't you think this is a bit much? There's no identifying thing there." "His reply was, "Yeah but everyone knows and that we want the post removed straightaway." So what, what I took from that is this is embarrassing to the organisation. Clearly to anyone it's pretty disgusting, it's pretty unhygienic, it's... and for that type of organisation it would, you know, pretty –*

## APPENDIX

*even worse. I guess maybe that would fly at a, I dunno, a mechanics garage or something like that. It'd be interesting to see what, you know, infection control type, what their thoughts would be on it. At the time I probably should've said. I never asked."*

*"It wasn't a just, "Don't do this." It was, "This is against the social media policy." It was – but there was no, "Yeah the situation is less than ideal and I can see where you're coming from and hey let's try and do something about it." It was just, "This is against this and it is embarrassing to the organisation." That was his words, actually. That it was embarrassing."*

*"One of my Facebook friends, the type of person that you'd probably stop and say hello to in the street but you wouldn't, you know, Facebook message them or Facemail them daily. Acquaintance type sort of thing. She saw it and her father was involved in facilities at this place and so she showed her Dad. Her Dad brought it to my manager's attention. My manager took it to Human Resources and was advised, I guess, how to deal with it and then came back to him and ended up having a chat with him about it."*

Subsequently, Hamish removed the post on Facebook and tightened up his security by unfriending several people in his Facebook network. He said that the issue continued to frustrate him for the remaining time he was employed by the organisation, but was not going to post about it again, given the consequences he had already experienced. He is still in touch with many of his former colleagues and he mentioned that finally the staffs are getting a kitchen sink: because the existing office building is being demolished and rebuilt.

*"I defriended that person and then had a tidy up of people I don't talk to anymore. A year and a half, two years down the track, outside of work when that facilities manager no longer worked for the organisation, at a, I believe Christmas barbecue, I hit him up about it and he said, "Yeah that was me and it got completely out of hand. I didn't want anything like that to happen. I just, just wanted it to, you know, I probably –" and he apologised, said, "I should've just come straight to you."*

*"The issue wasn't being addressed. There was no plan of, or no timeline of how we're going to address it or how to make things better and the provided solution I deemed unacceptable, washing your cups in the nearest toilet. To be clear the toilet, you know, basin – not the toilet itself."*

## APPENDIX

*"I don't know the exact time, but I'm gonna say five years out of the seven that I worked there and from – this is annoying, or you know, this is an identified problem, to posting about it. And then another two years of, it's still really annoying and it still pisses me off but I'm not gonna, you know, repost about it."*

Interestingly, he mentioned a strike action that took place, regarding an increase of pay, and how this in a way related to his dissatisfaction surrounding the 'slops bucket'

*"Market data for the same type jobs but in Christchurch instead – Christchurch City instead of where I was located indicated that on average people in the department were being paid 26% under what they should have been. In response to this, the employer offered a 1.5% rise and so we issued notice of a partial strike for two weeks, not using electronic equipment – sorry, electronic forms of communication. Email, phones, faxes, et cetera."*

*"I guess if you think you are being valued for what you think you are worth, you look the other way about the smaller things. When there are a large amount of things that stack up, then maybe a kitchen sink is the straw that breaks the camel's back"*

When reflecting back on the series of events and his own actions, he acknowledged that given the outcome he probably would have approached it differently to avoid being reprimanded but that it didn't serve as a means to rectify the situation. He also acknowledged that the post was more directed to those outside his workplace.

*"Would I have approached it differently? Yes. Yep. I would have"*

*"The talks I had with my manager never went far enough to like have to call in a union person at a meeting or anything like that but I did raise it with him. He agreed that it was shit and lets you know see what we can do but don't hold your breath. So would I have done the same thing again? No. Well it didn't get, knowing what I know now, I didn't get anywhere so why do it?"*

*"I guess now if I think about it, I didn't post it going, "Man this is gonna totally to get me a new sink." But yeah it's a hard, it's a hard one to answer because what was I thinking then? What was I trying to do? I guess get exposure. I guess."*

*"I'm a few years wiser now and if I go okay, what was a goal outcome getting a sink, was it achieved? No. Did it help? No. Did I get in a little bit of trouble for*

## APPENDIX

*it? Yes. Did lots of people see it, did it raise exposure? Yes. Did that do anything? No.”*

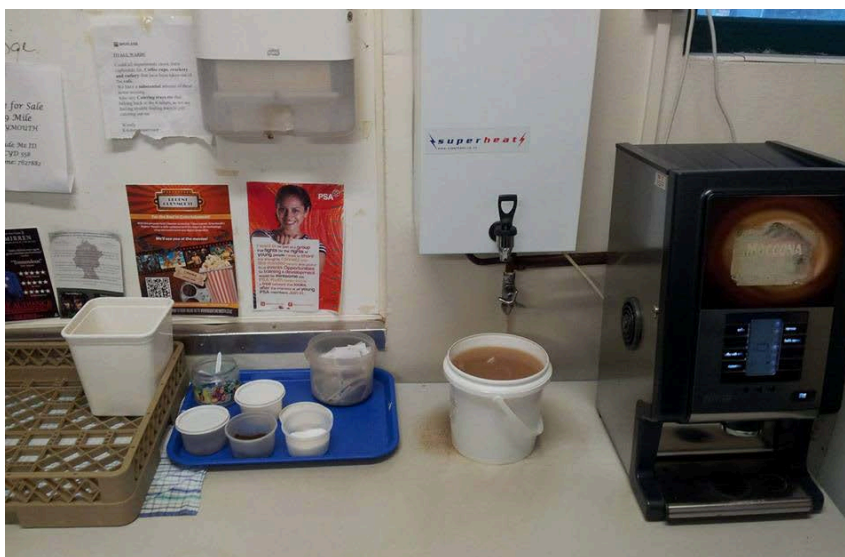
*“That’s all there was at the time. As I said before, if Snapchat had been around then, it just would’ve been posted to my story and... Yeah there’s like, it was, yeah the only, like, thing like that. It’s easier than, than messaging, direct messaging a whole bunch of people. I guess you just want some, some exposure.”*

*“I guess you go, this is something shitty, I want people to see it. The same tune as if you watch a video of a cat doing something cute. You don’t necessarily care. You just go hey look, you know, this is – everyone should watch this.”*

*“Well yeah I guess it’s the perceived image of outsiders. Everyone who worked there knew that, you know, they knew what the situation was and it was crappy but I guess for outsiders would never expect that.”*

Hamish was unable to provide a copy of the original post as he had been instructed to delete the material. However, he was able to provide copies of photographs he had taken, the first of which was the one he originally posted on Facebook.

**Figure 3 Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket**



*“here you can see the slops bucket nearly bursting its banks, note all the stains around the base of it, from previous spills”*

***Figure 4: Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket***



***Figure 5: Hamish's Photograph of the Slops Bucket***



*“and it gets better, because on this particular day, this was the secondary bucket, as the primary slops bucket had already been moved out of the way, as it was deemed full”*



## APPENDIX

### Participant 3: Michael

Michael is a 27 year old, Chinese male. He completed his education in New Zealand, and graduated from Victoria University in Wellington with a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting. Since graduating, he has also completed the NZCFA (NZ Chartered Accountant) professional examinations. Michael relocated from Wellington to Christchurch early 2014 upon obtaining an internal transfer with his existing employer.

Listening to Michael share his story was incredibly interesting. His Facebook post took place in September 2015, which he described as *“the height of the standing desk sort of frenzy”* at his workplace. His post showed a picture of a colleague’s desk where he had taken it upon himself to pile boxes on top of it, as a substitute for a standing desk. He mentioned that his employer had said that there was not enough money in their budget to replace all the desks with standing desks, but staff were offered new chairs instead.

*“Yeah so basically I think last year it was at the height of the standing desk sort of frenzy because a lot of people had already signalled their, you know, their want for one just because it’s better for posture. Some people have got back issues including myself, I had lower back issues last year and you know a few people had already raised it with management that we wanted standing desks. They had told us that there wasn’t a budget for a standing desk, or you know, to replace all our desks with standing desks or adjustable desks. But they were trialling some standing desk stations for the Wellington office but not the Christchurch office. So anyway this post in particular I just thought was funny and also a bit annoying because this is a director’s office and he had hurt his back playing some sort of sport so he really actually did need a standing desk”*

*“piling boxes on top of boxes on top of file holders seemed to be the only option at the time so I just thought it was a bit of a funny way to show my friends on the social media that people had to get creative in order to get what they want for the standing desks at work because yeah apparently the budgets didn’t stretch.”*

*“I think the solution to that was we were offered new chairs rather than new desks but yeah, definitely discussion going round in the office. “*

He shared his reasoning behind what motivated the post; having a personal interest in needing a standing up desk due to his recent back injury, as well as acknowledging his tendency to turn to humour. He also indicated how he believed it to be unfair that another branch of their

## APPENDIX

organisation was given the opportunity to trial standing desks. He also didn't believe that by posting on Facebook it was going to help him achieve obtaining a standing desk.

*"So I guess I shared it on Facebook because I just thought it was novel to stack boxes on top of boxes on top of file holders to make a standing desk and I dunno if I had the particular intention to sort of, like, I dunno embarrass or highlight the shortcomings of what I thought, you know, work wasn't providing us with but I just thought it was more novel than anything and also we had a few people leave but, you know, you're friends on Facebook so they can still see what the office is up to. Yeah."*

*"Yeah no it wasn't done in anger. I think there's some resentment that the Wellington office got to trial the proper standing desks, you know, of varying models and that just wasn't even a goer for the Christchurch office so I don't know. I don't know if it built into this particular post but there might have been some build up behind that, you know, just unconsciously just thinking, yeah well it's, I feel like we, we got a slightly rough deal compared to others. Yeah."*

*"Yeah. I guess. I wanted to achieve a few laughs out of the work – not conditions. It sounds poor if we say work conditions. We don't have poor working conditions but by far, you know, we don't get the best out of the public sector or the private sector either so I guess I just wanted to achieve a few laughs out of showing the weird way that we have to get around the lack of standing desks. Or some people did. Just to clarify, this is not my standing desk."*

*"Oh. It just... You know. There's a little bit of vindication, like yeah you know, like other people sorta agree that piling boxes on top of file holders is probably not the optimal way to arrange your own standing desk but yeah. Just a little bit of vindication like you know, smug satisfaction I guess you could call it. Yeah."*

*"I guess it was more relevant for me because that year I did get treatment for my back. You know, sought physio treatment and, and massage therapy for it. So I dunno. Yeah it was frustration and also just, you know, I like a bit of a laugh from showing silly situations which I thought this was. Cause the director you know, he had a, he had a bad back and even he was forced to wait until ACC stepped in and provided his one that he's got now so."*

## APPENDIX

*"No I didn't get reprimanded although I am Facebook friends with some managers but nothing got called up on it."*

*"Yeah. I knew this is – when I posted this I knew this wasn't going to get me a standing desk. Definitely. That was – that wasn't, I dunno, that wasn't the aim. That wasn't the conscious aim or the subconscious aim. I guess my subconscious aim was to, you know like do an undercover jab. People – like you know, it's not listed who I work for in my, on my profile but people who know me know where I work so yeah I know definitely it's this wasn't gonna get me the standing desk I wanted. Yeah and it still hasn't."*

Michael reflected on how at times throughout the year there were busier periods than at other times due to the nature of his work. During these busier times there felt like there was more tension in the workplace than during their quieter periods. He acknowledged that dealing with work related stress was something that he wasn't the best at addressing. He didn't believe that his views were representative of a widespread ongoing dissatisfaction at his workplace.

*"I think, you know, there's just a, generally when work's busy especially at this time of year, I think, you know, around that time of year was a very busy period for us as it is every year. There's sort of like a, it becomes a higher level of dissatisfaction with the workplace during that time"*

*"It's just again probably my personality trying to, you know, highlight, you know, what I consider a sort of funny situation but also, you know, take an undercover jab at the organisation and I think that's probably more reflective of a personal unhappiness with the workplace rather than, I dunno, rather than maybe indicator of a systemic sort of issue. All I can say is, you know, my views here aren't representative. I wouldn't say its representative of everyone that works there. You know, I'm only representing how I feel about the organisation at that point, yeah and this is how I'm sort of expressing that to people that I know."*

*"I guess personally whether I shared the post or not, my dissatisfaction with probably the working conditions and the hours that are involved, not particular to this organisation but probably because of the line of work that we're in, is you know, it's pretty constantly, you know, it hassles me a lot."*

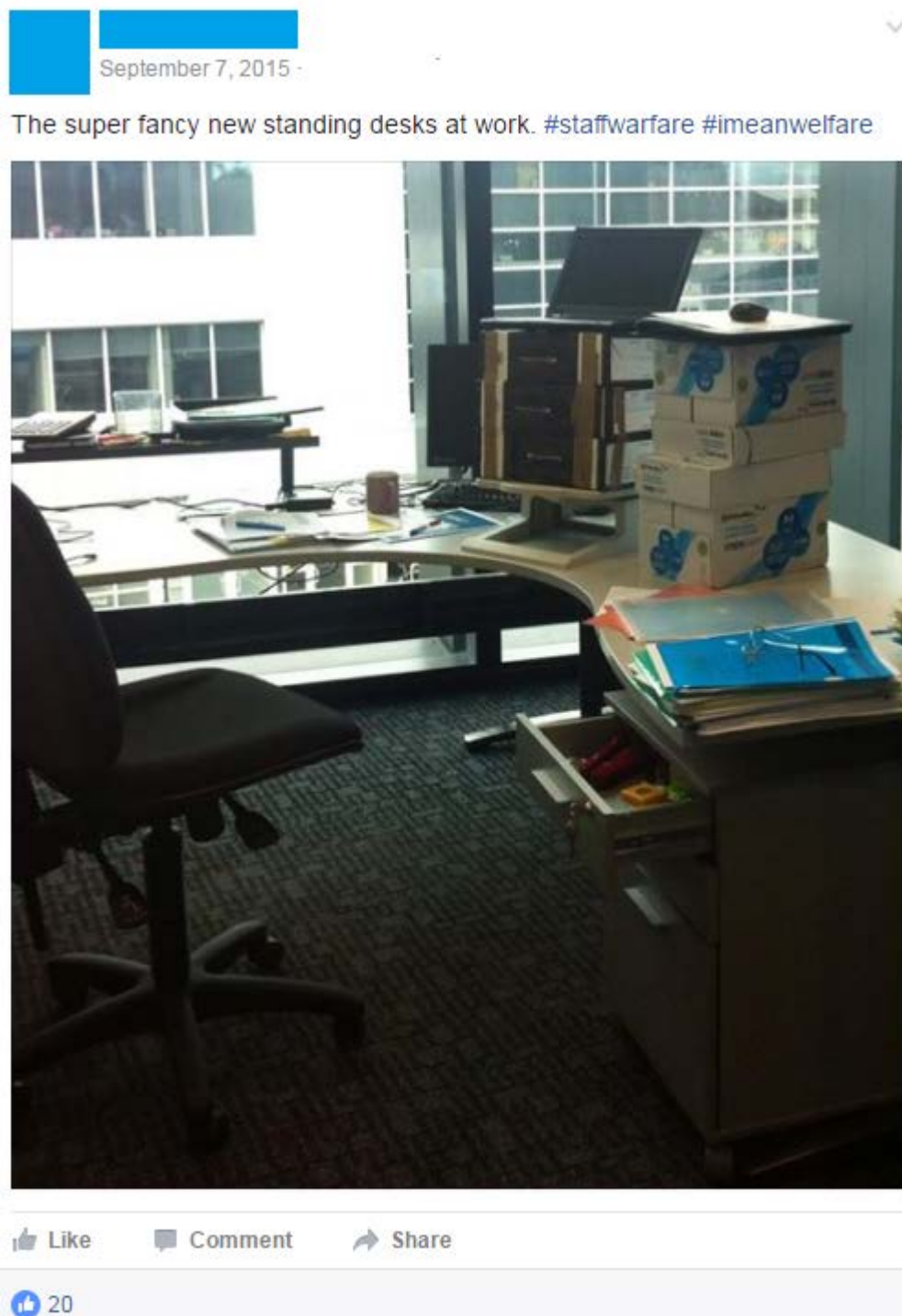
*"Yeah I can probably say this probably for more than just myself, is – most of us deal with it not that well but not probably as well as it could be. Like we all joke*

## APPENDIX

*about, because it's slightly true, you know, we gain a bit of weight because there's less time for exercise. There's less time to eat well and you know, a bit of stress either just working such long hours. So yeah, probably not as well as we could. I know I personally definitely don't deal with the stressful periods as well as I can."*

## APPENDIX

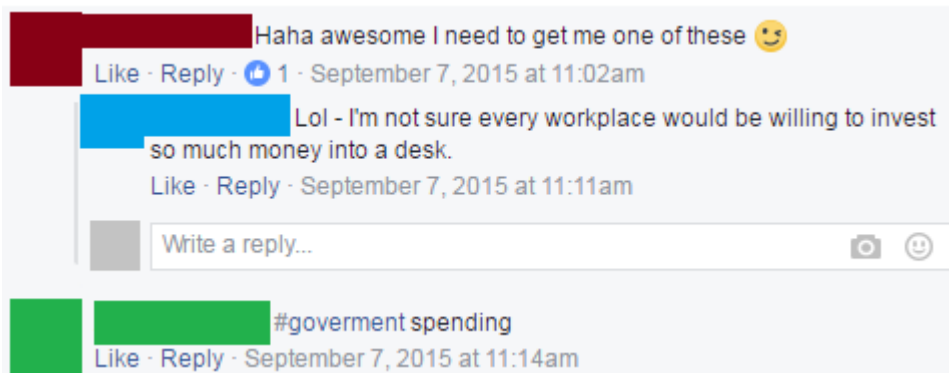
**Figure 6: Michael's Facebook post (Part 1)**



*Continued on next page*

## APPENDIX

**Figure 7: Michael's Facebook post (Part 2)**



## APPENDIX

### Participant 4: Charlotte

Charlotte is 19 years old and currently works in a supermarket bakery department near her home just outside of Christchurch. She is currently studying towards her undergraduate degree at the University of Canterbury, majoring in Law and Media Studies. She currently lives with her family and commutes to university each day. She was kind enough to meet the research after lectures and her interview was conducted in one of the private interview rooms on campus.

Charlotte initially expressed an interest to participate in the research when she saw one of the posters around campus. She mentioned that although she hadn't posted on her Facebook wall about work, she was constantly tagging her colleagues in memes she perceived as relevant to her current working situation. It was decided to include this participant within this research for several reasons. Charlotte was to represent the lower end of the age bracket and furthermore may have exhibited different user habits to the other research participants.

Charlotte described her current work situation where she had experienced conflict with her team leader. She had been employed in the bakery since the end of 2014 and had started looking at other retail jobs around the end of 2015 for the holiday period but was so far unsuccessful in obtaining a new role. She described one particular incident that occurred about a week before our interview, which helped communicate the nature of the relationship and interactions between her and her team leader. She also showed one of the memes she had tagged her colleagues in.

*"Honestly I was mentioning leaving like probably a year ago but like I'm getting to that point 'cos I'm actually like looking at – like I've applied for different jobs and stuff now 'cos I wanna leave over the holidays yeah."*

*"A year ago I was also looking at, like just those retail jobs over Christmas cause I wanted to get into those but I didn't get hired"....." Yeah but I'm applying for them again"*

*"I've applied for other jobs as well like Farmers and all that kind of stuff but it definitely is 'cause the work culture has gotten worse. Like I would be fine with staying over Christmas if not for that because she has asked me about working extra hours over Christmas and New Year's cause some of the full-time people wanna go away on holiday and stuff whereas I'm not going anywhere."*

*[My current job is]"Enjoyable in the sense that, like, I was Year 12 and it was my first job so it was like, I have a job now and I have money but yeah."*

## APPENDIX

*"I mean it's the same as any other, like, shitty minimum-wage job but management's kind of been getting worse so like that wants me – that has me wanting to leave and it has me a little angry over Facebook I guess"*

*"I'm probably not giving the best customer service because I hate my job."*

*"My manager has been on my ass about merchandising and it's like such bullshit cause I did what she told me to and now she's coming back at me like no you need to do this instead and I got like a letter. It's like this isn't a warning but it will be kept on file."*

*"Oh in the letter it said like if you're not sure – it was really annoying actually. She like reiterated that she was department manager like twice. She was like, if you have any more questions you should get into contact with me as your department manager. But I felt really shitty about it mainly because like we'd had that conversation and it was kind of embarrassing to be like pulled aside at work obviously, but like she made me feel like it was all good afterwards, like that was just a conversation, like it was over, that was all she needed to tell me and I get this fucking letter. Like clearly it was more, like, important than she'd made it feel like with that conversation you know."*

*"I've had a lot of conversations with a guy I worked with who I'm not really friends with but I just work some of the same shifts as him about the fact that he never gets in trouble over anything "*

*"We're all aware that like she definitely picks on certain people and we've had a lot of conversations about, like, she tends to pick on people that for some reason she thinks like aren't gonna like fight back. Like she won't pick on a lot of the full-time people because like she needs those people because they work full-time but yeah. There's a lot of obviously part-time students in supermarkets especially."*

*When discussing why she tags her colleagues in memes instead of posting on her wall, she indicated that she thought it posed far less risk of it being seen and subsequently being raised with her manager.*

*"I guess it just keeps it funny. Like plus I do know the dangers of like actually having a full on rant about something and then it getting back to my manager. "*



## APPENDIX

*"[my older colleagues] they have Facebook and I'm not friends with them but like if somehow they did see something yeah. So that's like harder to find for one and it, I dunno it's just like a meme culture thing. I mean you're not too old to know to not to be able to relate to that."*

She mentioned that she bonded with a colleague over a shared dissatisfaction for their work and leadership, which helped her deal with her current situation. She cited that her motivation to leave would be further escalated if her colleague/friend obtained another job.

*"It's just nice that like we can both relate to that and we'll have something to talk about it."*

*"It is nice to just like be validated and vent about it. Yeah."*

*"I would definitely be resigning cause like it is just the fact that I get along with like two people at work really well that kind of makes up for the rest of the shitty workplace at the moment."*

*"Yeah. But also I'm very hesitant to leave without having steady income so I am going, definitely going to get a job before I leave. I mean we've all kind of like, everyone really agrees that it's a pretty shit job. Like we clean the factory. It's pretty gross. Like we don't really like our job but it is a job and if the workplace environment goes downhill there's nothing really to like motivate you to stay. Yeah."*

She believed there to be an almost systemic dissatisfaction within her work team, citing that her department's engagement results rated far lower than the other departments, which are published quarterly in their staff newsletter.

*"We have these surveys every six months about, there's like a bunch of questions in them about, you rate it one to five. The first one's like I know what is expected of me at work and it's like I have what I need to do my job and I have noticed like in our department 'cos you get like we have a newsletter and they send it out and it has in it the overall store ones for all the questions like one to five what are the averages and our department especially 'cos we have like the last two surveys, they haven't put up the new one yet but the last two ones we definitely rate the poorest on, I have received recognition or praise in the last six months and there's another one, it feels like my opinions matter at work. Like those two are the ones that our department always... So that's like the only*

## APPENDIX

*way I guess I kind of show I'm not happy at work cos I gave very low ratings for all those questions yeah."*

### **Participant 5: Jack**

Jack's interview was conducted via Facetime because he was living and working in Melbourne, Australia. Originally from Christchurch, Jack completed a Bachelor of Science in 2010 majoring in Microbiology before relocating to Melbourne at the beginning of 2013. He had been employed by a private pharmaceutical manufacturing company for close to two and a half years, and had been with them for around 18 months at the time of his respective Facebook post.

Jack shared the circumstances surrounding his Facebook post. There was a strike that took place at his work because union based employees were attempting to renegotiate their employment terms and conditions. He used the term EBA (Enterprise Bargaining Agreement) which is the equivalent of 'Collective Bargaining' in New Zealand. Jack described how he posted about work because he thought it was funny that he had been locked into work for about four hours while the union and management undertook negotiations. He and other non-union members ended up having the rest of the week off work, but the strike itself carried on for several weeks

*"We were told the strike was going to happen 'cos there was going to be a picket line. Like that's fine. They legally have to let us through and then there was quite a big fight to get into work. They actually sent everyone else away from work. They said don't bother coming in. So it was me and my managers and a few other people that got in really early and then just like, well there's no point us being here 'cos we can't do any work 'cos the whole sites not here, so we tried to leave and they wouldn't let us leave. So we were actually trapped at work for about four hours"*

*"Can't really remember what I actually said in the post but I think it was something along the lines of, I'm trapped at work thanks to the EBA staff and I'm having a great time, 'cos I was doing no work at all. I was just playing games in the pool room"*

*"I ended up getting about a whole week off 'cos after they trapped us, our office at work, we weren't allowed to go back for the next four days I think 'cos they weren't just letting anyone in"*

## APPENDIX

He cited that he only had one friend from work on Facebook, so the post was more to communicate with non-colleagues outside of work. He didn't believe posting as wrong, because of the nature of the content, and perceived his privacy settings to be aligned to his workplace social media policy

*"I don't have Twitter so. So Facebook is really the only social media thing I'm on and I probably would have discussed it face-to-face with my, my colleagues as well who were involved."*

*"I'm not really friends with anyone at work so no one from work would've seen it. It was more of like the hilarity of it, like this is ridiculous"*

*"My workplace boss says I'm not allowed to state my job online. I'm allowed to say where I work but not what I do. For security reasons. And there's a lot of stuff around not, you know, bagging the company or saying bad things 'cos you can be held liable for that"*

*"No 'cos it's more of a statement of what was happening and not a derogatory post or pointing the finger."*

Although he cited hilarity behind the motivation for his post, he elaborated on his thoughts regarding the strike and union employees, as well as the work mood after the negotiations had been completed.

*"There was a lot of us versus them. Yeah so it was like non-EBA versus EBA. So like their contract negotiation was very public"*

*"They're all on strike over like really petty things that for us we're just like, just accept it and move on."*

*"Yeah there's definitely a, like for the operators on the floor, there was a, sort of a victory feeling for them 'cos they eventually got what they wanted, well most of what they wanted and then there was sort of a subdued feeling within management. Sort of just like yeah, you know, we don't like this but we have to move on to get the job done."*

*"It's all a bit ridiculous. Like it just seemed really petty."*

*"In the end management actually got what they wanted and at a lower price. So it's just like, what were you fighting for? When, whereas now they're all*

## APPENDIX

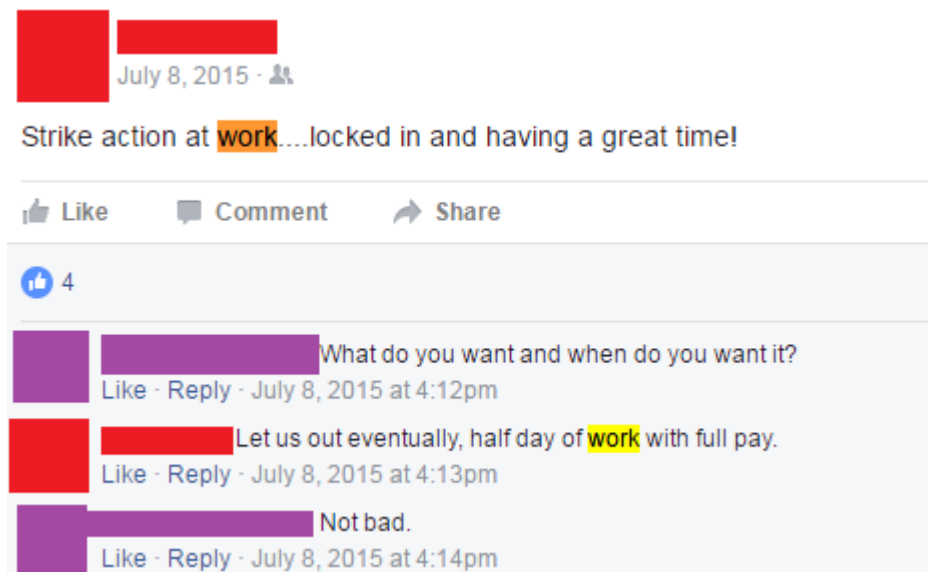
*coming in for that commitment RDO. They'd have got paid more if they had done the 38 hour week."*

*"There is definitely sort of a, like, a militant mentality also in the EBA, some of the EBA staff, sort of like the, almost entitlement feeling that they had and that – that can be quite, perceived as quite hostile when you're trying to work with these people and, you know, they're just, they're not interested? Yeah*

**Figure 8: Jack's Facebook post (Part 1)**



**Figure 9: Jack's Facebook post (Part 2)**



## APPENDIX

### Participant 6: Cara

Cara is a 27-year-old Healthcare professional, currently working in Christchurch. She completed her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees through the University of Otago. Whilst studying, she had numerous retail and hospitality jobs. Her interview was done in one of the private conference rooms at the University of Canterbury, and she kindly agreed to meet the researcher during a week off on annual leave. During the interview, she came across as bubbly and talkative with a passion and drive for her work.

Cara had been in her role for close to 2 years and explained that her post was after a particularly tough day where she and 2 other colleagues were covering the work of about 10 people. She said that she believed that the circumstances were avoidable, but leave had been approved for her colleagues and then there was some unexpected sick leave taken by some others.

*"So this was, I remember this day. This was early in February where it was a day that I had already pre-empted there was going to be an extreme shortage"*

*"They had already pre-empted that there was going to be a shortage of workers that day, and there was no available cover so I already knew what I was sort of walking into which was kind of annoying that they sort of had a week and they still couldn't find, you know, available cover for that day and I just turned up with like the worst attitude already that day"*

*"We just felt like it was quite unsafe and I guess the post at the end of the day was more of a, like, I kind of survived the day rather than a rant about how annoying it was at the workplace."*

Her post gained a lot of attention from her Facebook friends (with over 65 likes from Facebook friends, as well as numerous comments), many of which she said were colleagues. She said that her post was mainly motivated by her exhaustion after a gruelling day, but also to express her pride in herself and her two other colleagues (whom she tagged) for their team work efforts. She used the word "survived" several times, citing that she knows how unpredictable her work can be day to day. Responses to her post were mixed, but generally positive. Comments from her colleagues provided banter and a mutual understanding of the situation, whilst outsiders seemed genuinely surprised that circumstances like this happen, as well as comments regarding looking after her wellbeing.

*"It was just like this celebratory, like, 'look we did it, awesome work girls'. That was kind of more probably my angle rather than angry at my workplace although there was probably a bit of anger behind it."*

## APPENDIX

*"Like it's quite unpredictable and it can either, it can swing either way. It can either be a really quiet day or it can just be like the worst day ever, in terms of numbers of people coming through. Yeah it's not the most positive environment to be walking into. You know sometimes you turn up for work and all these people call in sick and there's nothing you can do about it so you just try your best but this was something that you were just like, ugh, like this was entirely preventable"*

*"We just shared the load and if another person just got hammered then we'd just try and help each other out for the day. I think that was in my post, like, "You guys are amazeballs." Like I think that was my original post comment. Like, it was like, yeah."*

*"Yeah, it was more like 'look what I survived today' and I, you know, I looked like shit and look how many, you know, like, 'look how much work's around my neck and I'm still alive' kind of thing. That's what I, and I was like, 'look everyone'".*

*"But it was, it was just like that. It was just like holy crap. I've just survived this awful day. Yeah. I don't – I can't even remember what the comments were. I think most of them was just like, "Oh look, you still look all right,"*

She explained her reasoning as to why she selected Facebook as her social medium of choice, citing technological ineptitude, as well as Facebook being a way for her to connect with family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. She believed that her post could be relatable to most people who have had a tough day at work.

*"I don't really know what I was hoping to achieve by posting it to be honest. Probably wasn't thinking very clearly at the end of that day."*

*"I'm a bit technologically inept. I'm not very tech savvy and I've never figured out how to use Twitter, and Instagram I just use as like a different kind of, like I just take nice pretty photos on Instagram and use it as a cool filter-based photo stream, so I guess Facebook's the only other thing where I've got that audience of the same job level as me, you know, my colleagues, that's where they all are."*

*"It doesn't seem appropriate to put an ugly photo of myself [on Instagram] after an awful day. "*

*"Everyone has Facebook. My grandma has Facebook, you know."*

## APPENDIX

*"I guess there are a few non-collegial, like, family members and stuff that were like, oh, you know, that's a bit shit that you have to do that but I think most, I can't even remember, most of them are like colleagues and yea. I think a lot of them are quite jovial comments as well, like, "Go for a different specialty next year," and stuff like that, it's just a joke."*

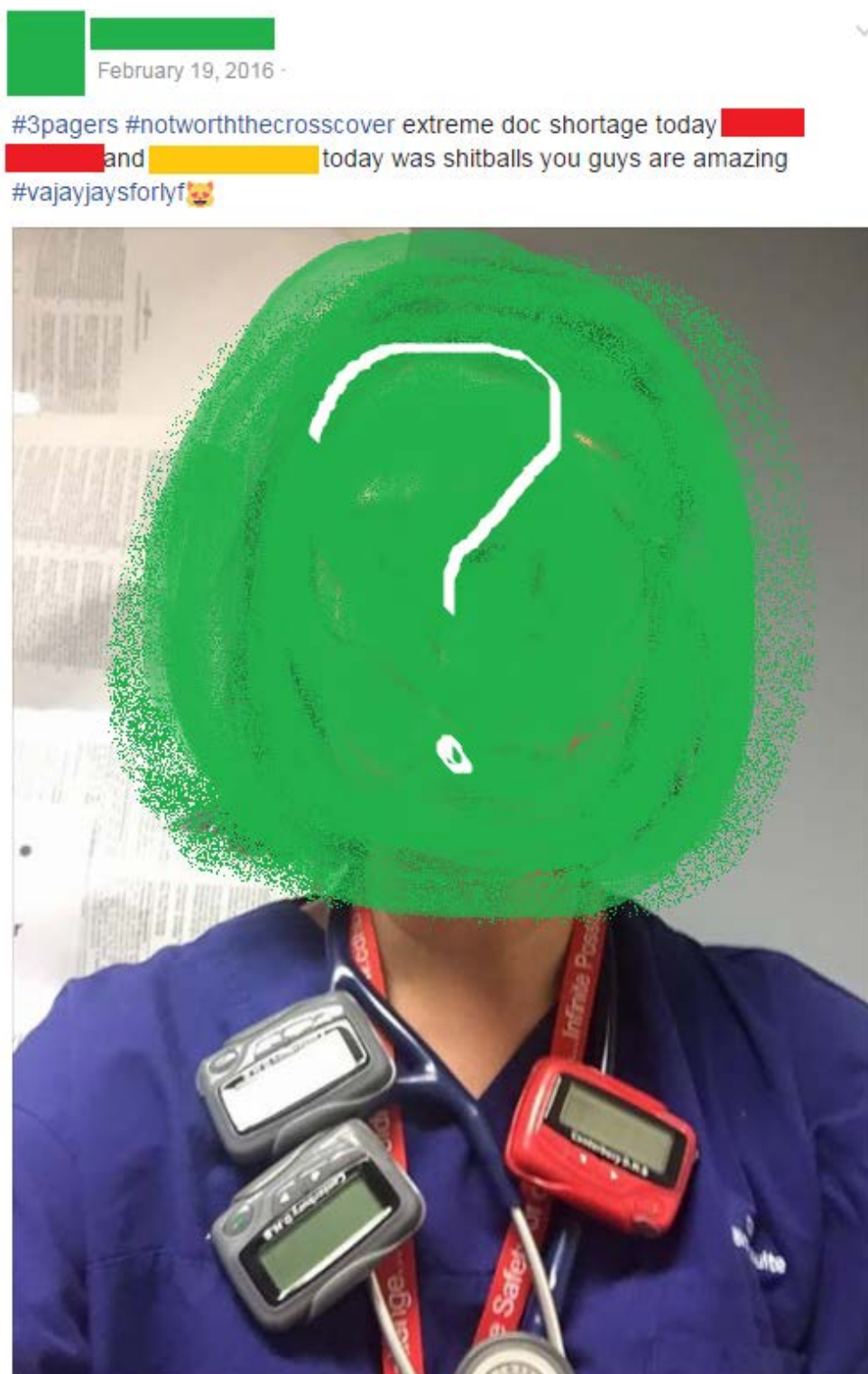
*"Well I think that's the thing when you post 'cos obviously a lot of my, probably the majority of my friends, it's a bit sad, are my colleagues and people that I've gone through uni with and we all work in the same role across New Zealand so we're all very familiar with, like this is just a classic example of everyday kind of occurrences for us so I guess you're venting to people that have been in the same position as you and they kind of understand. It's just a bit of a "lol". Like I didn't mean it as if, you know, "I hate my workplace." It was just a bit of a "Lol, look what I survived today," and everyone's like oh yeah. It's like, you still look okay."*

*"Cos they've all felt the same way. You know, not even – even my profession, you know, every job I'm sure would have days like this and everyone's, everyone can relate I think to having a crappy day."*

She acknowledged that due to her profession, she does need to be wary about what is publically visible on her Facebook, page, as well as the content she posts

*"I actually try to be quite careful about, 'cos I've thought about this before with my privacy settings and things like that. It always makes me a wee bit, oh that's tangential anyway but always, I'm always aware of privacy settings and things like that 'cos I don't like people being, that I don't know, that I've encountered in my workplace, being able to sort of look me up and things like that"*

**Figure 10: Cara's Facebook post (Part 1)**



*Continued on next page*



## APPENDIX

**Figure 11: Cara's Facebook post (Part 2)**



*Continued on next page*

## APPENDIX

**Figure 12: Cara's Facebook post (Part 3)**



## APPENDIX

### Participant 7: Lucas

Lucas's interview was conducted in one of the private conference rooms at the University of Canterbury. Lucas is currently employed as a bar tender and agreed to come in for his interview before starting his shift later that evening. He had been employed in several different hospitality roles since he left the job mentioned in his Facebook post. The day of our interview he appeared tired, possibly from working late the night before. After some food and coffee, Lucas perked up and described his story in great detail.

Lucas is currently 22 years old and had been working for a construction company for 18 months. He expressed his interest to be seconded a new subsidiary of his employer. He expressed a desire to do so because he saw it as an exciting opportunity to diversify his skills and learn some new things.

*"So I worked for a company that had, that also owned several other businesses and they started up a new, new factory out in Rolleston. So I sorta expressed interest, sorta said like hey, I wanna go work there. Saw it as a great opportunity to further myself to learn something new"*

Lucas was in this role for approximately 3 months before he posted on Facebook. Reading through the Facebook thread of Lucas's initial post and the subsequent responses from his Facebook friends, he went into quite a lot of detail regarding the circumstances that he was experiencing at work at the time. Throughout his interview, he cited various safety concerns and that there had been significant stress and anxiety that he felt, surrounding those circumstances at the time.

*"Health and safety was horrendous. Like... So health and safety was just something that they pretty much completely ignored just because they said oh, we're still getting set up, we're still getting set up but I knew how to implement these sorts of things like 'cos I'd worked very closely with health and safety at the previous place and it wasn't a difficult thing to implement certain things to stop people from getting hurt but I was working around people that really didn't care. Which made it that much worse. Like there's bad when there's no health and safety guidelines in place but when you work with people that just completely ignore health and safety and just do not, like they kind of intentionally go around it, like they, they really don't want to know about health and safety. They just want to get the job done as quickly as possible and not care if someone gets hurt. I refused to do certain things like I didn't want to get up on top of a trailer that was probably about five metres up in the air with*

## APPENDIX

*no harness gear. 'Cos I've worked with harnesses before and I knew, I knew the laws and I knew how badly I could hurt myself if I wasn't harnessed up"*

*"I just ended up feeling really, really unsafe at work because I wasn't sure if I was gonna be the next person to die at work. So it was definitely that sense of genuine harm, genuine physical harm coming to me and in this process of me getting annoyed about the health and safety I kind of made myself a bit of an outcast, where the people that were ignoring the health and safety were actually the leaders and they'd get annoyed at me because I wouldn't do something because I didn't think it was safe."*

*"I was genuinely concerned for my, for my physical well-being and it just got me so worked up and it just got me so stressed out having to work in that environment where I know what I'm ta – I know what I'm doing and I know what I'm talking about. I'm just getting ignored"*

Lucas acknowledged his dissatisfaction surrounding the situation because he had assumed that given the industry health and safety standards and potential penalties if these are not met that health and safety would have been more of a priority for other staff and the foremen. He also seemed frustrated that despite raising his concerns with the foremen, he perceived no action was being taken.

*"Because the previous branch of the company that I worked in was very, very health and safety focused and I'd been on several full day courses"*

*"I expected it to be as good if not better because of the, like the actual factory"*

*"the manager who's actually been set up to run this business, his reputation of being very hard on health and safety and that's what I was really actually keen on because it's like, think that's a new, it's my generation is the first one that's actually very accepting of health and safety cause the, 20 years ago it wasn't really a thing but now it's expected so everyone that's coming into the workforce now, they kind of expect it?"*

*"what I've always experienced when I'm working around dangerous equipment and dangerous environments, is that there's a very high expectation of health and safety so that's what I expected of a brand new business that's being run by someone who has a health and safety reputation and that's why it was just so much more disappointing that these were things, things were going wrong,*

## APPENDIX

*because it was actively endangering me and the people around me and just seemed like nothing was really getting done about it “*

*“I’d tried so many times and I’d tried to go through the right avenues and I’d done it several – so I’d gone to the person above me and the person above them and then the person above them and still nothing was getting done so I just got to the stage where I’d had enough and that’s when I posted on social media.*

*“yeah but once you’ve identified the problem you need to do something about it, not just kinda say yeah I’ll fix that in a few weeks when I think I’ve got the chance. When it’s not, in my eyes, it’s not a very difficult thing to do”*

*“There was other things that just weren’t being fixed and they were a massive concern for me”*

*“So that was a big, big thing for me, was sort of like being listened to and it’s, there’s a difference being listened to and actually, them actually going and doing something about it”*

*“Because as much as they say yeah you are right, these are problems, yeah but once you’ve identified the problem you need to do something about it, not just kinda say yeah I’ll fix that in a few weeks when I think I’ve got the chance. When it’s not, in my eyes, it’s not a very difficult thing to do. “*

*“He was very good at sitting there and listening to me but he wasn’t very good at actually putting things into action to fix the problem”*

Lucas said that he felt constantly exhausted and at times, had to pull over his car whilst driving home to nap. He also mentioned there was a time that he wasn’t responding to friends or socialising because he felt so drained after work.

*“Yeah. It was [negatively impacting on] my whole, my whole life really.”*

*“Like I’d be in the car on the way home and I’d have to pull over and sleep on the way home from Rolleston to Wigram. Like it’s a short drive but I’d be so drained and so exhausted from, from the day of work.”*

He mentioned that his primary motivation for posting on Facebook included to be able to communicate with friends and family that he wasn’t in a great space as well as seeking validation that his concerns regarding the health and safety breaches were well warranted.

## APPENDIX

*"I just vented on Facebook just because it's my best form of communication to a wider audience. It's just like, so more than just the people that I'd see every day. It's like I couldn't really go see my friends. I was just too tired to really do anything so it was just getting it out to family as well, family and friends. Just people that I don't see every day that might be able to help, just, yeah, just a wider audience."*

*"It was reaching out and trying, asking for help from anyone that might be able to give it to me and it was a bit of a vent. Like I, I'm very much a venting person. Like if I'm annoyed, angry, upset, whatever, I'll just blurt it out. It's just this was a different mode of doing that. Yeah."*

*"It got the point across, like, just let everyone know that I was in a bad space. So people were a bit more understanding if I wasn't keen to hang out. Or I wasn't texting them or I wasn't doing what I normally do"*

*"I just wanted to essentially whinge and get someone to sorta say that my, sort of my concerns were well-placed. So like it wasn't just me kinda complaining about something that isn't valid that, like someone else would actually be on my side. So I was looking for someone to be on my side."*

In regards to the comments from his Facebook friends, Lucas perceived them as "all very supportive"

*"They're all trying to suggest things to try and help me, suggesting things that I could be doing"*

When posting, Lucas said that he didn't do it with the intent of figuring out a way to solve the issues he was *experiencing*

*"It was never going to solve the issues at work. It was more just as looking for something else"*

One unexpected consequence of his post was that one of his friends communicated a job opening that he may be suitable for. Subsequently Lucas obtained a new role about a month after his Facebook post.

*"I'd just had enough and it was at that stage where even if the bosses saw it [the post], what could they do or even if they did do something I really wouldn't care. Like I wouldn't really mind whatever happened because I just didn't want to be there. "*

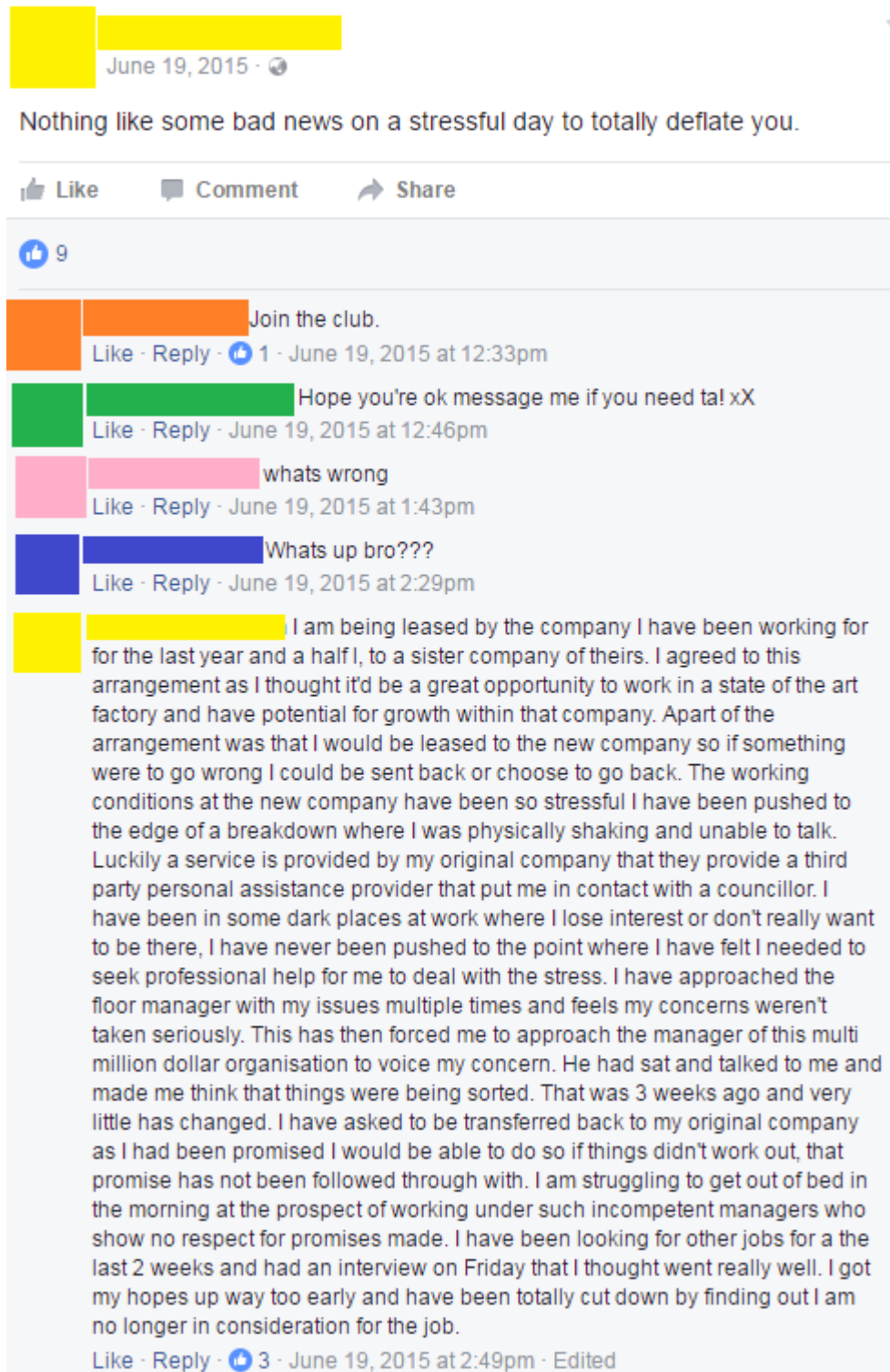
## APPENDIX

*“And it ended up communicating to someone who could actually help me with my problem. That may have just been luck but I still, I still think like if I was in the same position again I’d do it again because if I hadn’t’ve done it then I wouldn’t’ve moved on. “*

*“Yep and what actually ended up happening from that post is I got offered a position at another company that I ended up taking. So like it, it actually worked. Like it actually did something for me. It might not’ve but it did. “*

## APPENDIX

**Figure 13: Lucas's Facebook post (Part 1)**



*Continued on next page*



## APPENDIX

**Figure 14: Lucas's Facebook post (Part 2)**

A screenshot of a Facebook post and its replies. The post is from a user with a green profile picture. Below the post, there are several replies from users with various colored profile pictures. The replies are dated June 19, 2015. The interface shows a 'Write a reply...' input field with camera and emoji icons.

Honestly had no idea, sorry to hear 😞 nothing more disappointing than being made to feel like you were heard to find nothing is as it was promised!!! Hope that someone helps you out properly cause after what you just said it's totally unfair!!!  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 3:06pm

Write a reply... 📷 😊

is it  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 2:39pm

That sucks bro. Sorry that's happened to you. I hope things get sorted quickly for ya and the tough time is short. Take care  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 4:38pm

The only thing holding my sanity together is good friends and bartending. Getting to be myself at work and not having to stress or worry is refreshing. I've decided I need to find a job that gives me that, which is why I was looking at sales rep jobs. The key to a happy life is being happy in what you do everyday not just in the weekends  
Like · Reply · 2 · June 19, 2015 at 5:04pm

Can you live off the bar tending wage for the time being? I think you need to pull ya anchor from this job and get out of it. At the end of the day it is just a job but work is still a big part of ya life. I know there is development opportunities there but no job is worth going through shit for. Why don't ya do an actual builders apprenticeship? You would be more skilled up than other starters  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 5:10pm · Edited

^he only does 2 shifts a week at the bar, but i agree, builders apprentice youd be great  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 5:15pm

That's not ideal, Neil  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 5:20pm

Come to welly and do a builders course at weltec. You can live with us for a bit  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 9:42pm

don't think an apprenticeship or being a builder is what I want. It's end up being same shit different day. I need a job where I can have an input and my personality is appreciated not discouraged. My current working conditions is like an apprenticeship and I hate it  
Like · Reply · 2 · June 19, 2015 at 9:49pm

Fair enough. Come to welly anyway  
Like · Reply · June 19, 2015 at 9:49pm

## APPENDIX

### Participant 8: Lucy

Lucy's interview was conducted in one of the private conference rooms at the University of Canterbury. She kindly agreed to meet the researcher one night after work, and the interview didn't finish till close to 7 pm.

Lucy came across as friendly and outgoing and spoke very quickly and excitedly. She mentioned several times that she was happy to participate in this research. What initially was interpreted as nervousness to share with a complete stranger, turned out to be apprehension in recalling her experience. As she spoke, the distress that she felt regarding her workplace was evident in her voice and at one stage a rash appeared on her neck. She communicated she was happy to continue.

Lucy is 35 years old, and had completed a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Animal Science through Lincoln University. She is currently employed as an administrator for a large retail organisation that specialises in construction supplies and equipment. She had been in this role for close to two years, but recalled that she had been experiencing tension between her and her team leader for around the past 12 months.

Lucy mentioned that her team leader has been making snarky comments towards her regarding work and personal life frequently throughout each day despite her performance reviews being favourable. She has posted comments and shared 'memes' on her Facebook wall, which she believed were relatable to her current work situation. Most recently, she regaled an instance where she posted on her Facebook page about an incident where she had only been at work for 5 minutes before her Team Leader made a snarky remark towards her.

*"Last Friday five minutes into my, I just started at 8 o'clock, five minutes into my, my, my work I asked my manager a question about a credit report and she snapped at me and like 'should send it to this person' this person or yeah, I was just like, five minutes! I've been here for five minutes. I've just literally sat down, logged in, looked at my emails, asked her this question. Oh, you know, still haven't heard back from blah blah in this department about this email, and she snapped and I was like, that's a record."*

Lucy had raised these issues with her manager several times and said that although her team leaders demeanour changes after being spoken to, she says it isn't long before she reverts back to making snarky comments.

*"Yeah, yeah so every few months when I get to the point that I just, I can't deal with her, I, I go to my branch manager and I do complain about her and yeah"*

## APPENDIX

*and he said, so last time, about three, four months ago when I last went to him, he said okay start writing. Keep a notebook of all the times, date and time, the co – times that she's said, commented on something... I said to him, it's that bad that I can only document, submit things I remember, the things that kind of stand out, the things that make me laugh? The comments that make me go, 'that's brilliant, this is so funny'. You know? I have to laugh, I now laugh about them because I'm just like, what's going on in her mind to say that and who thinks I'm gonna be all right with that or she needs to say it?"*

Recently, her team leader has suggested that they attend mediation with their manager to attempt to resolve their issues, but Lucy had expressed a low confidence that this will rectify the issues permanently. Unfortunately, Lucy communicated a desire to seek other employment or would be happy taking a settlement payment if she was to raise a personal grievance. She mentioned how she hopes to start trying to start a family with her husband but believes the stress that she is feeling from her current employment situation may make this a challenge. While I was walking Lucy out, she said *"I can't wait to get pregnant so that I can leave"*

*"I'm just over the job. Over her. I'm over going crying to my branch manager. I'm sick of going crying to him. It's just not getting anywhere. I don't think [mediation] will do much*

*"No, It [Mediation] won't help. Yeah. I'm done. I'm done with the job. I don't want the job anymore. I don't want to work there anymore. I want a new job and I'm trying unbelievably to apply for new jobs"*

Lucy appeared to find comfort in posting on Facebook because she feels it is an effective *"outlet for my frustration or anger"* *"because otherwise I sit and I simmer and I get more, more angry about it and then if I don't get it out I just, yeah it just kind of, eat away at me I guess. "as well as seeking "kind of like reinforced, like, positivity from other people I know who may have worked there in the past or know her so I guess other people I work with who are my friends on Facebook who don't know that this goes on because they're in completely another department".*

*"So I can sit on my phone at lunch and I can type this stuff and because I'm just, I'm so angry that I need to get it out somewhere and I go rant to Facebook just because"*

*So yeah so I will go onto Facebook if I do find it funny yeah because I think other people will find it funny too. Be like, oh she's really having to work with this person, this is awesome."*

## APPENDIX

*"But I, I think I put it on there because I found it so nasty to the point that it was comical. It was funny and I was just like, this is fu – this is brilliant, like, this is just, I laugh about this and I put it on, I think I put it on Facebook because, like I couldn't really call my friends at the time cause they're all working and stuff and I just needed to have an outlet there and then because there's only one other person I kind of would've spoken to at work who I would've told them about it. I did tell her later on in the day but she was up at meetings to begin with so I put it on Facebook cause I just needed an instant outlet to vent my what the fuck situation and, and it just kind of de-stressed me for a little bit just to, to get it out cause if I just sat there I would seethe and get more, more angry and I've got emails and banking to do and I'd just get more, more, more angry if I didn't let it out. So it was like a stress, stress relief? Stress, kind of."*

She mentioned that her relationship with her husband and close friends has felt increasingly strained over the past months.

*"So you know, I, my friends are all, I ring them and they don't answer or you know, it's sometimes easy just to vent to [my husband] him but yeah so, stress is not really helping"*

*"I also go home to my husband and I vent to him but he used to work there so he knows who I'm talking about but at the same time of course it starts arguments because he doesn't wanna hear about it. He's just like I don't want to hear about it. Stop talking about work. I'm just like well what else, who else am I meant to talk to? You know, you know Kate. You know what she's like. You've worked at – we worked at the same company. It's how we met. Yeah. You know what she's like."*

It was heart-breaking to hear of how the stress that Lucy was feeling was continuing to affect her outside of working hours and she reflected on how she believed these ongoing issues was affecting her work performance

*"I've just gone onto anti-anxiety medication in the last week because I can't sleep – I'm having trouble sleeping. I'm not eating very much. I'm getting anxiety. I wake up at four, five in the morning dreading my alarm to go off cause then I've got to, it goes off, I've got to get up and drive the hour into work from Rangiora and then deal with her all day and I, it's affecting me now on a mental and physical level"*

## APPENDIX

*"I think I'm becoming, not that I'm becoming less professional cause I am very professional in my job. I'm becoming like, I don't give a shit anymore about the work. I said to my branch manager my motivation has gone. I don't care about the work. I don't – the work's easy"*

*"I'm still doing it, I'm still meeting all my dates, doing the month and all my health and safety dates and doing everything to my 100% but I just don't care anymore"*

## APPENDIX

**Figure 15: Lucy's Facebook post (Part 1)**



**Figure 16: Lucy's Facebook post (Part 2)**



## APPENDIX

### Participant 9: Alice

Alice is 26 years old, and lived and studied Nursing in Palmerston North before obtaining her first postgraduate nursing role in Christchurch. After working in Christchurch for 2 years, her and her partner (also a nurse) both successfully obtained jobs in a city in North Eastern Australia where they were employed for approximately 12 months before returning to Christchurch. Her desire to relocate to Australia was due to a desire to travel, gain international nursing experience and the attraction of higher wages in Australia.

*"I had a horrible shift and I had written something about how I needed a bottle of wine".*

*"it was a cumulative thing so like, it had been a pretty horrific week from memory and it was just sort of, you know, I guess, that sort of second-to-last day of, you know, X amount of shifts in a row and I just had a gutsful and I kind of felt like everybody needed to know that"*

*"It's not like I'd given any real context. It's not like where I work is posted on my Facebook page. It's not that I'd said, you know, I work in this place and it's so crap that I have to drink X amount of, you know, alcohol to try and dull the pain. You know, that they just assumed that it was based on the fact that everybody else was in the same boat where work wasn't particularly pleasant at the time"*

A co-worker whom she assumed was an existing friend on Facebook saw the post. She believed it was this person was the one reported it to her manager. Alice recalled that her manager called her in and showed her a copy of her post, and was instructed to remove the post.

*"wasn't appropriate because it encouraged binge drinking and that as a health professional that wasn't appropriate".*

Alice communicated during her interview that she perceived this interaction as *"underhanded"* but acknowledged how the post could have been misconstrued, given she didn't provide any context of the situation she had experienced.

*"It's not like I'd given any real context. It's not like where I work is posted on my Facebook page. It's not that I'd said, you know, I work in this place and it's so crap that I have to drink X amount of, you know, alcohol to try and dull the pain. You know, that they just assumed that it was based on the fact that*

## APPENDIX

*everybody else was in the same boat where work wasn't particularly pleasant at the time"*

She cited that although she may have received validation from her Facebook friends, ultimately she didn't feel differently about the circumstances

*"I was probably still pretty miffed with the whole situation".*

*"Most people said something to like the effects of yep, I understand how you're feeling, that kind of thing. Like generally the sort of the consensus was that it had been, like from work colleagues, from other work colleagues, was that it had been like a fairly miserable sort of week and that everybody was sort of feeling that same way and I guess that's, you know, what I wanted was some kind of feeling of validation which is what I effectively got when other people said yes it's been shitty".*

When asked about her role and workplace, she described a mismatch between her expectations of her profession and how other employees should conduct themselves and the organisational culture.

*"I guess it was a particularly difficult facility to work in in terms of their overall policy and governance wasn't actually directed towards patient care, rather towards, I guess, paper-driven outcomes which is not a way that I like to do the job that I do. So I found that particularly frustrating. Rather than positive patient outcomes it was literally about here's this tick board, fill this in. Yeah and like I guess people don't really fit into tick boxes and so it was also to do with other things like nurse to patient ratios was really poor, medical team consultation with staff was really poor. Pretty much I would say everything about it was poor. Staff who had obviously been there for a really long time were clearly quite burnt out. And I guess in terms of a wider environment, they were quite racist particularly with like indigenous people and that didn't really sit very well with me. I found it was quite draconian and old-fashioned. So basically it was really out of line with how I consider where my profession should be going and how we should be working within that so that was basically why I left, yeah... I guess another part of the reason why I left was because I got a job that was, I guess overall not necessarily higher paying but certainly a higher quality sort of day-to-day experience"*



## APPENDIX

She acknowledged that her interpretation of what she considered appropriate conduct in her industry and her expectations had been formulated through her education and experience in her prior roles.

### **Participant 10: Lily**

Lily is 25 years old and completed and had previously completed Bachelor of Sports coaching at the University of Canterbury before returning to study a Bachelor of Physiotherapy through the University of Otago in Dunedin, NZ. Whilst completing her undergraduate studies, she worked as a swim tutor and lifeguard for several years in Christchurch. She was kind enough to meet shortly after she returned to Christchurch over the summer for the holidays.

She discussed her work as a swim tutor and lifeguard, and regaled particularly memorable stories about her time working. She described her colleagues as fun and social, with many of them also undertaking university study.

*“Like there were often social events that a lot of people go to so you know we bonded, you know, we communicated and talked like outside of work in a far more social environment so yeah.”*

The circumstance she explained to the researcher that her Facebook post was during the summer of 2012. She and another lifeguard were required to clean up faecal matter from one of the pools, an incident that occurred relatively frequently. She communicated that pool cleans up were the responsibility of the lifeguards.

*“I had to clean up toddler shit from a pool where I had to get in the pool because the vac wouldn’t sink and that was not much fun. I kind of voluntarily got in but at the same time it was like, this is really gross because I’m the one doing it and like there wasn’t the ability for me to go and have a shower or a clean up afterwards. The toddler pool wasn’t that deep but still it’s kinda like I would like to go and just clean off whatever potential water is on my legs just cause it’s gross”*

Lily didn’t appear to express frustration regarding being required to clean up the mess; in fact she was motivated to get the pool open quickly and got into the pool to attend to an equipment malfunction. She mentioned that although pool contamination was a semi-regular occurrence at the pool, it was the first time where she had actually gotten into the pool to assist with the clean-up. She reflected that:

## APPENDIX

*"Maybe it was nearer the end of my shift so maybe that was why I chose to, like, to get in the pool in the first place cause I knew I wasn't gonna be hanging around for that long. But still you know, you'd think that anyone who had contact with something contaminated, regardless of what point in the shift they were, you'd think that maybe they would be able to go and like just get themselves sorted and yeah. You would, yeah you would like to think that a biohazard would, you know, have a procedure for clean-up, more than just dealing with the pool? "*

Her dissatisfaction appeared to stem from her expectation that following getting out of the pool, and based on an underlying assumption that it would have been reasonable to allow herself the opportunity to wash herself off and change into dry shorts before heading back to work. She was unable to recall whether this was because she was told she couldn't, or there was the implicit expectation that she had to get back 'on deck' (poolside) that she was unable to clean herself off after getting out of the pool. She communicated that as part of their jobs, they had to familiarize themselves with their handbook of "SOP's" (Standard Operating Procedures) of which "pool contamination" was covered. She acknowledged how her own actions may have deviated away from what was expected; however she felt her actions necessary to be able to rectify the issue at hand.

*"I mean, potentially like in their procedures there would probably be something about minimising personal contact with bodily fluids. And so maybe me getting in a pool was probably completely against what procedure was in the first place"*

*"Yeah. It'd be something that I think anyone – if anyone else in that situation would probably want to go and just for hygiene purposes yeah. Cause you can't really dump pure chlorine on your legs to clean those off. That's not a good way of cleaning potential toddler poo off"*

*"it would've taken a couple of minutes to walk into the changing rooms and just, like, do my legs, just wash over but was probably back on deck, you know, straightaway in potentially wet clothes. Yeah."*

Whilst she cited initial frustration about not being able to clean herself off, by the time she posted on Facebook she felt as if the frustration had evolved to a bit of sarcastic humour.

*"That's the thing, like, when you're on poolside you don't get, you don't have access to your phone so you have to wait for after – like either on a break or*

## APPENDIX

*when you get home, you're finished, to actually access anything so, you know, that allows you the opportunity to like just process or move on with things, you know, so you probably don't dwell on things as much." If she had had the ability to post straight away, she acknowledged that "There maybe would've been some more, a couple of expletives or strongly worded words, you know?"*

*However, she did express a desire to share the circumstances with her Facebook friends, not with malicious intent to disparage her employer but more so because of the novelty/unusual nature of the even. Although she mentioned it was a relatively regular occurrence in her role, to others who worked in different sorts of jobs, its likely to be a circumstance that others wouldn't often come across, motivated by the exceptional nature of being unable to clean herself off, as a usual clean up would have gone unmentioned. It was more "The novelty of the grossness"*

*"It was in no way for people to look at the post and go ew, that's so gross, let's not go to that pool. Because well, guess it's kind of a well-known fact that toddlers poo in pools. You just don't get in toddlers' pools, you know?"*

*[The post] "Wasn't specifically targeted at something that the company had done that was against me. It was just a, 'haha, guess what I did today'. This is probably something no one else does, yeah... This is entertaining, this'll make you feel – this'll make me – you feel less shit about your day yeah"*

## APPENDIX

**Figure 17: Lily's Facebook post**



## APPENDIX

### Appendix J: Codes, Themes and Categories from Interview Transcripts

#### First Cycle codes

Acceptance of how unpredictable the workload can be	Communicating these issues to a wider audience	Disbelief	Failure of management to act	Holistic Key Themes	Means to seek other opportunities	Perception of colleagues actions or behaviour	Raising the issue with management	Seeking positive vibes	Unsatisfactory response from management
Accepts a challenge	Comparisons made to others	Discussion about work online	Fear or inability to approach manager or management	Hours of Work	Misinterpretation of meaning	Perception of Collegial Friendship out of work	Reaching a Threshold	Seeking Support	Unsympathetic towards others issues
Acknowledgement of issues from management	Confidence in management to address issues	Disengagement from work or role	Feeling disappointed	How the post got seen by management	Morale	Perception of own values and work ethic	Reaching tipping point	Seeking support of co-workers	Unusual or unique circumstances
Acknowledgement of issues from peers	Conflict	Disengagement with the issue	Feeling disposable or replaceable	Humour	Motivation to act	Perception of potential consequences	Reasons for not approaching management instead of venting on Facebook	Seeking Sympathy	Values
Age Difference	Conflict between colleagues	Emotions	Feeling like your concerns have been heard	Inability to go to a Higher Manager	Motivation to make a complaint	Perception of Their Actions	Reasons for selecting FB	Shortage of staff	Venting about circumstances
Assertion of Hierarchy	Conflict between groups	Employee doesn't feel valued by organisation	Feeling like your concerns have been heard, acknowledged and action taken	Inability to resolve with colleagues	Motivations	Perceptions of Equality	Reciprocity	Social Media Policy	Venting about colleagues sideways
Assumptions	Conflict with manager	Enjoyment related to money	Feeling Trapped	Inability to talk with friends	Naming the organisation	Perceptions of Inequality	Recollection of what lead to the post	Solution reached	Venting about management upwards
Attempts to raise with management	Conflict with organisation	Enthusiastic to change things	Feeling valued	Inconvenience	Negatively impacting on out	Perceptions of Unfairness	Relatable to others	Sub Standard work facilities	Venting Face

## APPENDIX

					of work life				to Face
Breach of minimum standards	Conflicting priorities	Escalating the issue to higher management	Feelings about their job	Informally Raised	No response from management	Perseverance	Relationship with colleagues	Talking with Friends	Venting on Social Media
Breach of psychological contract	Connecting with peers	Escalation of original issues	Feelings around inability to leave organisation	Informally reprimanded	Normalisation of Facebook	Personal opinion	Remorse	Temporary fix	Venting to colleagues face to face
Catalyst to seek other employment opportunities	Consensus between colleagues regarding issue	Exit the organisation	Feelings of acceptance	Internal conflict	Not Addressing the issues	Personal steps to cope	Responses from Others to Post	Tensions or contradictions	Venting to friends face to face
Catharsis	Consequences	Expectation that action will be taken	Feelings of Annoyance	Irreparable	not seeking a solution	Personal steps to remedy issue	Responses to post	Thanking support of co-workers	Venting to Friends Privately
Censorship of material	Continuing to ruminate out of work hours	Expectations for the type of organisation	Feelings of blown out of proportion	Issues at work	Novelty or unusual circumstances	Personally invested	Retrospective reflection	Third party intervention	Venting to those who they believe who understand
Change in own behaviour	Contradictions	Expression of dissatisfaction	Feelings of inconvenience	Issues with Job Sharing	Ongoing	Personally reflecting on event	Rumination about issue	Threatening the reputation of the organisation	What happened
Collateral damage to event, causing inconvenience	Convenience of Social Media	Expression of fact	Formally raised	Journey of Decisions	Opinions about online conduct	Potential bullying, harassment or being singled out	Seeking a reaction	Threats of breaches of social media policy	What Happened after
Colleagues as friends	Dealing with stress	Expression of personal opinion	Formally Reprimanded	Journey of frustration	Oppression of employee voice	Privacy Settings	Seeking a solution	Time to calm down	Within usual expectations of job

## APPENDIX

Collective collegial grievance on issue	Delay in ability to post	Expression of unmet expectations	Functional purpose	Justification of behaviour	Organisational policies	Private sector	Seeking a solution but knowing likely not to resolve via this means	Tolerance	Workplace dissatisfaction
Commitment to role post event	Desire to share	External information	Gerund-	Legal Obligation	Organisational Structure	Public perception of role	Seeking acknowledgement	Trade offs	
Communicating personal circumstances	Deviant Behaviour	Facebook and community	Getting out	Level of Experience	Outlet	Public sector	Seeking Advice	Treated like an outsider	
Communicating the issues with general people	Different circumstances to usual	Facilitating an acceptable solution	Going above and beyond	Maintaining control over their Facebook community	Past the threshold	Questioning outcome or purpose of venting	Seeking Exposure	Trust	
Communicating the issues with other colleagues	Different to what you expected	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Gratification or validation	Maintaining work and personal boundaries	Perception of an unacceptable solution	Questions whether things will change or be resolved	Seeking help	Unexpected consequences	

## APPENDIX

### Second Cycle Codes

Unpredictable events	Communicating the issues with other colleagues	Disengagement from work or role	Failure of management to act	Negatively impacting on out of work life	Privacy Settings	Seeking a solution but knowing likely not to resolve	Talking with Friends
Acknowledgement of issues from management	Comparisons made to others	Employee doesn't feel valued by organisation	Feeling disappointed	Normalisation of Facebook	Questions whether things will change or be resolved	Seeking acknowledgement	Temporary fix
Acknowledgement of issues from peers	Confidence in management to address issues	Escalating the issue to higher management	Feelings of acceptance	Not seeking a functional solution	Reaching a Threshold	Seeking Advice	Decline in tolerance
Acknowledgement of issues from colleagues	Connecting with peers	Escalation of original issues	Feelings of Annoyance	Opinions about online conduct	Reaching tipping point	Seeking Exposure	Trade offs
Assumptions	Continuing to ruminate out of work hours	Exit the organisation/desire to exit	Wanting Gratification or validation	Perception of potential consequences	Reasons for not approaching management instead of venting on Facebook	Seeking help	Unsatisfactory response from management
Attempts to raise with management	Convenience of Social Media	Expectation that action will be taken	Irreparable	Perceptions of Equality	Reasons for selecting FB	Seeking positive vibes	Venting to those who they believe who understand
Breach of minimum standards	Dealing with stress	Unmet expectations	Justification of behaviour	Perceptions of Inequality	Reciprocity	Seeking Support	
Breach of psychological contract	Desire to share	Facebook and community	Maintaining control over their Facebook community	Perceptions of unfairness	Relatable to others	Seeking support of co-workers	
Change in own behaviour	Disbelief	Facilitating an acceptable solution	Low morale	Personal steps to cope	Rumination about issue	Seeking sympathy	
Communicating personal circumstances	Discussion about work online	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Motivation to act	Personally invested	Seeking a reaction	Internal solution reached	



## APPENDIX

Initial Themes (from second cycle codes)

<b>Initial dissatisfaction experienced by the participant</b>	<b>Pivotal event or circumstance experienced by the participants</b>	<b>Participants sense making processes</b>	<b>Participant makes attempts to rectify issue</b>	<b>Participants vents frustration</b>	<b>Participants desire to share circumstances with others on Facebook</b>	<b>Participant's desire to gain support from others on Facebook</b>	<b>Participants desire to maintain interpersonal connections using Facebook</b>	<b>Participant continues to experience dissatisfaction</b>	<b>Participant no longer experiences dissatisfaction</b>
Unpredictable events	Acknowledgement of issues from management	Acknowledgement of issues from peers	Attempts to raise with management	Communicating the issues with other colleagues	Communicating personal circumstances	Communicating the issues with other colleagues	Connecting with peers	Change in own behaviour	Feelings of acceptance
Underlying Assumptions	Attempts to raise with management	Acknowledgement of issues from colleagues	Confidence in management to address issues	Communicating personal circumstances	Connecting with peers	Communicating personal circumstances	Convenience of Social Media	Continuing to ruminate out of work hours	Internal solution reached
Breach of minimum standards	Comparisons made to others	Colleagues as friends	Escalating the issue to higher management	Convenience of Social Media	Convenience of Social Media	Convenience of Social Media	Desire to share	Dealing with stress	Trade offs
Breach of psychological contract	Dealing with stress	Confidence in management to address issues	Expectation that action will be taken	Dealing with stress	Desire to share	Dealing with stress	Discussion about work online	Disengagement from work or role	Responses from Facebook friends
Comparisons made to others	Employee doesn't feel valued by organisation	Convenience of social media	Facilitating an acceptable solution	Desire to share	Discussion about work online	Desire to share	Facebook and community	Employee doesn't feel valued by organisation	Interpretation
Dealing with stress	Unmet expectations	Dealing with stress	Failure of management to act	Discussion about work online	Facebook and community	Discussion about work online	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Escalation of original issues	
Disbelief	Feeling disappointed	Desire to share	Motivation to act	Facebook and community	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Facebook and community	Normalisation of Facebook	Exit the organisation/desire to exit	

## APPENDIX

Employee doesn't feel valued by organisation	Feelings of annoyance	Discussion about work online	Personally invested	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Reasons for selecting fb	Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook	Reasons for selecting Facebook	Failure of management to act	
Unmet expectations	Personally invested	Escalating the issue to higher management	Questions whether things will change or be resolved	Failure of management to act	Normalisation of Facebook	Wanting gratification or validation	Opinions about online conduct	Feeling trapped	
Failure of management to act		Expectation that action will be taken	Reaching a threshold	Normalisation of Facebook	Opinions about online conduct	Normalisation of Facebook	Perception of collegial friendship out of work	Irreparable	
Feeling disappointed		Facebook and community	Reaching tipping point	Not seeking a functional solution	Perception of Collegial Friendship out of work	Opinions about online conduct	Personal steps to cope	Justification of behaviour	
Feelings of Annoyance		Facilitating an acceptable solution	Unsatisfactory response from management	Opinions about online conduct	Personal steps to cope	Perception of Collegial Friendship out of work	Privacy Settings	Low morale	
Feeling as if concerns have not been acknowledged		Facilitating conversation with others on Facebook		Perception of an unacceptable solution	Privacy settings	Personal steps to cope	Reciprocity	Negatively impacting on out of work life	
Perceptions of Equality		Wanting Gratification or validation		Perception of potential consequences	Reciprocity	Privacy Settings	Relatable to others	Not seeking a functional solution	
Perceptions of Inequality		Justification of behaviour		Personal steps to cope	Relatable to others	Reasons for selecting FB	Seeking a reaction	Perception of an unacceptable solution	
Perceptions of Unfairness		Maintaining control over their Facebook community		Personally invested	Seeking a reaction	Reciprocity	Seeking acknowledgement	Perception of potential consequences	
Personally invested		Motivation to act		Privacy settings	Seeking acknowledgement	Relatable to others	Seeking advice	Personal steps to cope	

## APPENDIX

Reaching a Threshold		Normalisation of Facebook		Reasons for selecting FB	Seeking Advice	Seeking a reaction	Seeking Exposure	Rumination about issue	
Reaching tipping point		Not seeking a functional solution		Relatable to others	Seeking exposure	Seeking acknowledgment	Seeking help	Temporary fix	
Rumination about issue		Opinions about online conduct		Seeking a reaction	Seeking help	Seeking advice	Seeking positive vibes	Decline in tolerance	
Trade offs		Perception of an unacceptable solution		Seeking a solution but knowing likely not to resolve	Seeking positive vibes	Seeking exposure	Seeking support	Responses from Facebook friends	
Unsatisfactory response from management		Perception of potential consequences		Seeking acknowledgment	Seeking support	Seeking help	Seeking support of co-workers		
		Personal steps to cope		Seeking Advice	Seeking support of co-workers	Seeking positive vibes	Seeking Sympathy		
		Personally invested		Seeking Exposure	Seeking Sympathy	Seeking Support	Talking with Friends		
		Privacy Settings		Seeking help	Talking with Friends	Seeking support of co-workers	Venting to those who they believe who understand		
		Questions whether things will change or be resolved		Seeking positive vibes	Venting to those who they believe who understand	Seeking Sympathy			
		Reaching a Threshold		Seeking Support		Talking with Friends			
		Reaching tipping point		Seeking support of co-workers		Venting to those who they believe who understand			
		Reasons for not approaching management instead of venting on Facebook		Seeking Sympathy					
		Reasons for selecting FB		Unsatisfactory response from management					

## APPENDIX

		Relatable to others		Venting to those who they believe who understand					
		Trade offs							

### Categories

Antecedents	Dissatisfaction followed by pivotal event OR pivotal event and subsequent dissatisfaction
Motivations	Participant engages in sense making process and makes decision to vent or attempts to rectify the issue
	Facebook is deemed appropriate to vent, access social support and share experiences to assist in relationship maintenance
Presentation of Phenomena	Participant makes failed attempts to rectify the issue and vents on Facebook
	Participant perceives a resolution cannot be reached and vents on Facebook
Consequences * influenced by participants interpretation and the responses received from Facebook friends	Participant experiences ongoing dissatisfaction
	Participant does not experience ongoing dissatisfaction

### Appendix K: Process of Thematic Analysis

The process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) entails six distinct phases as set out below:

#### **Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data:**

- Transcribing the data
- Reading and re-reading the data,
- Noting down any initial thoughts or ideas to explore.

#### **Phase 2: Generating initial codes:**

- Inductively coding interesting and relevant features of the data in a systematic way, across the entire data set
- Collating data relevant to each code
- Arranging and rearranging codes
- Codes should be valid to the phenomena being researched, distinct with no overlap, and exhaustive where all relevant data is able to be categorised under a code.
- This process involved reading and re reading the transcripts, continually refining the codes (first and second cycle coding).

#### **Phase 3: Searching for themes:**

- Arranging and rearranging codes into potential themes
- Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

#### **Phase 4: Reviewing themes:**

- Arranging, rearranging and checking that themes are consistent with the coded extracts as well as the broader data set
- Generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.

#### **Phase 5: Defining and naming themes:**

- Ongoing analysis to continue to refine specifics of each theme, as well as the overall story the analysis tells,
- Generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
- Cluster the meanings of every unit into categories that provide an overall description of the core commonality and structure of the phenomenon.

#### **Phase 6: Producing the report:**

- Selecting vivid, compelling extracts of the data to represent the emergent themes and theoretical framework
- Providing examples,
- Relating the findings back to the original research questions and discussion of theoretical literature
- Producing a scholarly report of the analysis.